

THE CHRONICLE November 1999 (No. 184)

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of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues

November 1999

Volume 51, No. 4

Whole No. 184

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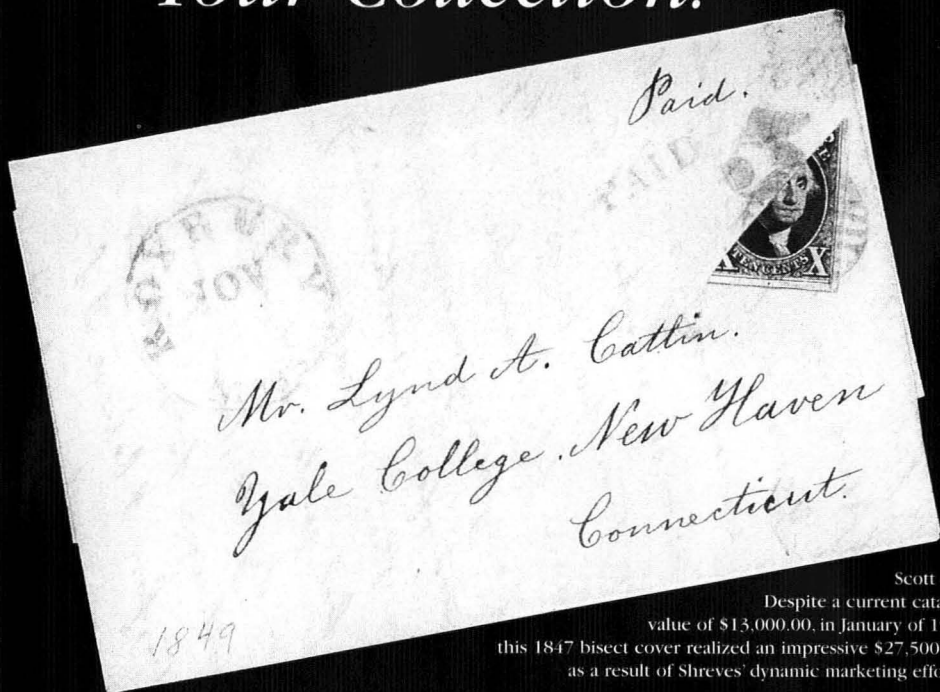
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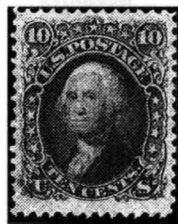
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Section Editor's Note: The following article by Calvet M. Hahn offers a fresh perspective on a nineteenth century post which has engendered much controversy in print among students and collectors of government carriers and local posts covers and adhesives.

The questions which have been disputed in respect of the Northern Liberties News Rooms are: (i) whether the letter service was operated as a local post (like Blood's Dispatch, for example) or as a government carrier (somehow affiliated with the Philadelphia Post Office); (ii) whether the imprint found on lettersheets and folded letters was made by a wooden handstamp or by a letter press using a metal die; and (iii) if it was made by a letter press, whether the imprint was preprinted (like stamped envelope stationery) or was imprinted to order when the customer purchased the lettersheet.

In 1993, Calvet M. Hahn discussed each of the then known covers, and also took firm positions with respect to some of the disputed issues, in his article, "The Northern Liberties News Rooms Markings" (*The Penny Post*, Vol. 3, No. 1 [Jan. 1993]). Mr. Hahn's position in that article that the imprints were too finely engraved to have been created from a wooden die was firmly challenged in a letter to the editor by printing authority Wm. P. Barlow, Jr. (*The Penny Post*, Vol. 3, No. 3 [July 1993]).

Other students have examined this problem and the others, sometimes with the direct aid of Mr. Hahn, although not as persuasively as he has.

Most recently, Scott A. Trepel, as part of his creation and publication of the approximately 600-page catalogue for the sale of the David Golden collection of United States carriers and locals,¹ summarized, *inter alia*, the several disputed issues involving Northern Liberties, recited and clearly explained the positions taken by Elliott Perry, Mr. Hahn and by others, and also set forth his own considered opinion with respect to the several questions ("NORTHERN LIBERTIES NEWS ROOMS SUB POST OFFICE PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA"²).

In the article below, Calvet M. Hahn takes the information which we know about the owner of the Northern Liberties News Rooms to its next logical step: he examines the relationship that other members of the McMakin family had to Northern Liberties and to other contemporary news rooms in that District. He also offers us his current insight into the nature of the Northern Liberties operation and imprint.

- Steven M. Roth

REEXAMINING THE NORTHERN LIBERTIES QUESTION

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Initial Reports

The Northern Liberties postal impressions were first reported on the Evans correspondence addressed to Mary Evans, a student at the Kimberton Boarding School near Chester, Penn. The discoverer, Charles H. Stone of Cambridge, Mass., wrote the markings up in the June 1905 issue of *American Journal of Philately*. Stone took his find to John

¹The sale of the Golden holdings will be held on November 15-17, 1999, by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. In preparation for the sale, Scott A. Trepel, President of the Siegel Auction Galleries, undertook to research and to write a sale catalogue which, in my opinion, is an extremely valuable reference book. I will review this catalogue/reference work in the next issue of the *Chronicle*.

²Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., Sale 817, *The David Golden Collection of United States Carriers and Locals*, November 15-17, 1999, Volume I: Carriers, p. 116.

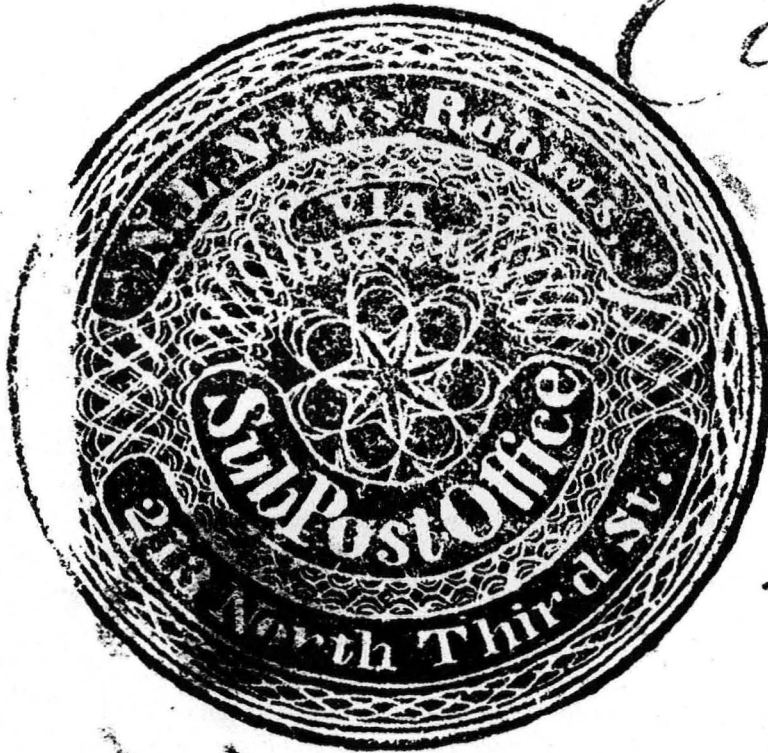



Figure 1. Detail from Northern Liberties News Rooms cover, Dec. 7, 1835

THE NORTHERN LIBERTIES FREE ADMISSION
NEWS ROOMS,
 213 N. THIRD STREET, NEAR CALLOWHILL,



IS constantly supplied with papers & magazines from all the principal sea-port cities and inland towns in the United States—besides those of England, and other parts of Europe. A regular Bulletin or Record of the latest News is also kept, where every intelligence of importance is immediately inserted on the arrival of the mails. Strangers are invited to participate in the advantages offered by this establishment. Single copies of the SATURDAY COURIER are for sale at the Bar.

June 22—1833

Figure 2. Initial ad for Northern Liberties News Rooms, from Mar. 24, 1833 issue of *Saturday Courier*, Philadelphia

Kleemann, then a major New York stamp dealer, who arranged some additional publicity and placed a number of the pieces with major collectors such as George Worthington, George B. Mason and Ferrari, while keeping one example for himself. In a note to Elliott Perry, the late George B. Sloane indicated that Stone may have found the covers as early as 1900 and may have sold two of them directly.

The Covers

I summarized the published data in an article in the January 1993 *Penny Post*, to which the reader is referred. There, some nine of the 17 covers discussed were illustrated. An 18th cover, Figure 1, dated December 7, 1835 fits into the published sequence as number 5a. It is also from the Evans correspondence and is rated 6¢. It is now the earliest example to show the deterioration of the outer edge of the marking under the word "North."³

The dates of the covers range from October 9, 1835, which is probably a first day cover, to May 21, 1836, which is about when the postal phase of the Northern Liberties News Room ceased. All the covers had a red Philadelphia octagon handstamp and all but one, to Thomas Astley at 9th and Walnut in Philadelphia, were either marked PAID or rated or both. All except the first were single rated. The earliest, a front, was double rated and turned and addressed back to John Minyzer, 226 3rd street, Philadelphia, for carrier delivery close to the Northern Liberties office at 213 N. Third Street. It was returned October 9th from Reading, Pa.

A significant question is how many Evans covers exist? One source stated seven, while another stated nine. As eight, including a piece, have been listed by me, the total was probably nine, making the grand total between 18 and 20, with only four showing a hollow circle at center. Three are from the Rev. McGill find, and two from the Smith find (Josiah or Joseph Smith) at Clearview, Pa.; all the rest are individual correspondences. John A. Fox told George Sloane he had seen an otherwise unrecorded example on an old almanac.

The Proprietor

The owner of the news room was Andrew McMakin, who was not found in Philadelphia city directories in 1831 or 1832, but who apparently began the operation in the summer of 1832. In the Spring of 1956, J. William Middendorf, a major collector and holder of nine Northern Liberties covers, went to Philadelphia with George Sloane to do further research on the operation. In the March 24, 1833 issue of the weekly journal, *Saturday Courier*, they found an advertisement with a wood engraving of a spread eagle illustrating it. As this ad was datelined "June 23 tf," it had to refer back to 1832 (Figure 2).

This initial ad confirms the Northern Liberties News Rooms operation began in 1832, probably under Andrew McMakin's direction. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where the newspaper files were located, had papers showing the spread eagle ad through the issue of March 29, 1834; the next issue, of April 3rd, omitted the illustration, while the file of papers between the issue of December 27, 1834 and July 4, 1835 was missing.

Andrew McMakin continued to advertise his News Rooms through the issue of June 4, 1836. However, on May 28, 1836 he, with Ezra Holden as partner, bought the *Saturday Courier* from its proprietors Nelson Woodward and Thomas C. Clarke, and continued its

³Cover #5 must have been an Evans cover since it appeared as lot #1 in the Bartels sale of April 5, 1911. As it was not illustrated, it is possible that the December 1 date was a typographic error by Bartels for December 7th.

operation at its 70 Dock Street location through 1842.⁴ In 1843, the newspaper moved to 97 Chestnut Street. Both McMakin and Holden were still in charge of the paper in 1849 when it was renamed the *American Courier*. This paper lasted until November 8, 1856.

With his new purchase, McMakin's attention was focused upon the newspaper, although he apparently continued to maintain control of the newsroom. Coincidentally with the purchase of the *Courier*, a rival Reading Room was advertised just a short distance away:

Irving Free Admission Reading Rooms 178 North Third above
Vine...James F. Willding, Proprietor.

The News Rooms

A major expansion of the Northern Liberties News Rooms took place during 1835. In the April 1835 publication of the *DeSilver City Directory*, the News Rooms was listed for the first (and last) time, as one of the "principal Hotels in Philadelphia," with Andrew McMakin as proprietor. In the issue of October 10th of the *Saturday Courier*, which covered the preceding week, the editors ran a notice that McMakin had prepared, "a new and appropriate stamp...now imprinted upon all letters deposited at his office." The date indicates that the earliest Northern Liberties letter of October 9, 1835 may well be a first day cover; it is certainly a first week cover.

This October 10, 1835 editorial (Figure 3) noted the News Rooms had "several hundred newspapers" which was expanded by December 12, 1835 to "the most extensive collection . . . in the country." On December 26, 1835, McMakin's ad in the *Saturday Courier* claimed "upwards of 300 files of PAPERS, from all parts of the United States, Europe and Asia." By January 23rd, 1836 the list of papers was extended to Africa and South America (Figure 4).

McMakin's December ads compared his "free admission" news room to other news rooms and coffee houses elsewhere in the world. The coffee house first arose in Vienna and quickly spread to London, where newspapers were added to the shipping news during the 18th century as newspapers began to be published in quantity. A prime model was London's Lloyd's Coffee House. They became prime sources of information as the significance of newspapers grew in commerce. Abe Schoenfeld's article on the subject in *American Philatelic Miscellany* notes the reading rooms, foreign letter offices and merchant's exchanges are direct descendants of the old coffee houses. He specifically discusses the evolution of the N.Y. Merchant's Exchange through the Tontine Coffee House to the Merchant's Exchange of the 1830s. From this origin sprang Gilpin's ship letter office of 1833-34 which became a reading room by 1838, and the Hudson's news-room of 1835. Later, James Hale opened his news room in 1838 while in Boston Toppliff's News Room was preeminent. Most are fairly well-known philatelically.

With the December 1835 burning of New York's Merchant Exchange, Gilpin moved to 56 Broadway and then back to 40 Merchant's Exchange, using a newsroom handstamp by 1838. William Hudson opened his newsroom at 61 Wall in 1835 where he used a large oval handstamp. He later moved to 30 Broad in 1837-38. James Hale's newsroom was at 2 Tontine Building from 1838 to 1842, when he shifted to #5; and in 1843 he moved to 58 Wall where he remained until the end of the independent mail period in 1845. In Brooklyn, the U.S. Naval Lyceum had a newspaper file and forwarding service from 1835 onward.

⁴This date comes from the usually meticulous research of Elliot Perry, who undoubtedly based it upon something he saw. Steven M. Roth has uncovered other data about the newspaper takeover that suggests a partial if not complete takeover occurred in December 1835 with the last issue under Woodward and Clarke being December 12, 1835 and the new Philadelphia *Saturday Courier* under McMakin beginning December 19th.

SUB-POST OFFICE.

enterprising, attentive and indefatigable proprietor of that popular establishment, the Northern Liberties Free Admission News Room, and the business of his Sub Post Office so on the increase, as to induce him to press new and appropriate stamp, which we have is now imprinted upon all letters delivered at his office, This is an arrangement must tend still further, to increase and extend the celebrity of the News Room, now universally recognised as the general head quarters of the Northern part of the City, as well as Northern Liberties. It is emphatically what it purports to be—a News Room—filing several hundred newspapers from all parts of the Union, and giving besides more local news than can be got elsewhere—excepting always in the columns of the Philadelphia Saturday Courier. It is gratifying to Mr. McMakin, to find his efforts so highly and universally appreciated, they unquestionably appear to be.

Figure 3. *Saturday Courier* of Oct. 10, 1835, with editorial regarding the Northern News Rooms

**THE NEWS ROOMS,
FREE ADMISSION,**

No. 213 N. Third st., a few doors below Callonchill.

THESE ROOMS, forming the most complete and extensive establishment of the kind in the world, is open for visitors daily, from 6 A. M. till 10 P. M.

There are in the Rooms upwards of **THREE HUNDRED FILES OF PAPERS** from all parts of the United States, Europe and Asia, Africa, South America, and the Canadas.

ANDREW M'MAKIN, Proprietor.

The **SATURDAY COURIER** may be subscribed for, or had by the single copy, as above. Jan 23—if

Figure 4. Jan. 23, 1836 ad for Northern Liberties News Rooms

A significant difference between McMakin's operation and the rest was his "free admission" feature whereas the rest charged a subscription fee. This meant he had to obtain his revenue from some other source, presumably coffee or liquor, for he quickly gave up advertising as a hotel. With McMakin's acquisition of the *Saturday Courier* and the appearance of the Irving Free Reading Room, all postal activity by the Northern Liberties reading rooms seem to have ceased; certainly no covers with markings are known.

In the 1837 McElroy's directory, Andrew McMakin is listed as the publisher of the *Saturday Courier* at 70 Dock Street, near Walnut, living at 279 Race Street. James M. Young is listed at the Northern Liberties Free Admission News Rooms, which is separately listed at 294 North 2nd, a location one block east and one block north of 213 North 3rd. This is probably a typographic error.

Young had begun advertising his proprietorship of the Northern Liberties News Rooms on November 12, 1836, keyed to run six months, but ceasing after February 14, 1837, just three months into the ad:

FREE ADMISSION NEWS ROOMS, No. 213 N. Third st., a few doors below Callowhill. These Rooms, forming the most complete and extensive establishment of the kind in the world, is [*sic*] open for visitors daily, from 6 A. M. to 11 P.M.

There are in the Rooms, more than 500 papers, from all parts of the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Canadas.

All the weekly papers, and the Lady's Book, besides Bulwer's Novels, may be subscribed for or had by the single copy as above.

JAMES M. YOUNG
Proprietor

n12 -6m

No pertinent information, about James Young was located in the 1838 and 1839 city directories. However, in 1840 he was listed by McElroy's directory as a gentleman living at 137 Buttonwood.

What has not been previously reported is data on other members of the McMakin clan. In the 1835 directory, John McMakin, Jr. was listed as an innkeeper on Callowhill Rd, between Schuylkill and 3rd and 4th streets, while Joseph and Benjamin McMakin were listed at the Bath Coffee House at the corner of Tunis's Wharf and South Wharves. In 1837, John McMakin was still listed at the Callowhill tavern location, while Benjamin was listed at the tavern at 32 South Wharf as well as at the Bath Coffeeshouse at Lawrence above Buttonwood. Joseph was also listed at the South Wharf tavern. By the city directories of 1840, both John McMakin, Jr. and Joseph McMakin are listed at the Northern Liberties Free Admission News Rooms, 213 North 3rd, and these listings run through 1843. However, by 1845, Joseph McMakin is listed as living elsewhere but employed at 32 South Wharf. He is similarly listed in 1846, while in 1847, Benjamin McMakin is listed as employed at 32 South Wharf.

Interpreting the above directory data suggests that although Andrew moved his personal interest to the *Saturday Courier*, the family was also involved in other coffee houses and taverns and that when James Young failed to make a go of the Northern Liberties Reading Room, other members of the clan were called upon to run it. The last philatelic note on the McMakins is that on June 28, 1851, Andrew McMakin is cited as one of the citizens petitioning Postmaster General Hall in favor of Blood's Despatch Post in that firm's unsuccessful effort to stop the government from initiating its own city despatch.

McMakin was thus basically a tavern or hotel-keeper when he was not running a newspaper. There is little or no evidence he ever made money from the News Rooms other than as a draw for his taverns or inns.

The Northern Liberties Marking

There are two versions of the Northern Liberties impression, both in black and measuring 30.5mm in a circle. The first type is known used from October 9, 1835 through April 5, 1836. Then four covers with the second style, with parts of the design omitted, are known between April 30, 1836 and May 21, 1836. In the January 1993 *Penny Post* article, it was suggested that the marking was possibly engine-turned lathe work. In the July 1993 issue, William P. Barlow, Jr. suggested further study would be desirable. Two things were done as a result of his remarks:

One, examples of the Northern Liberties marking were scanned into a computer, split, and inverted to see how well the match was. If the marking was engine-turned it should be quite good. It was not that good a match. The center design showed a different orientation and the edge holes did not overlay. Second, the markings were sent to Eliot Landau for examination. He is a specialist in ivory and wood engraving in addition to his philatelic studies. He magnified the marking almost six times and noted that the design showed a series of uninked holes (made by the vessels which carry water and nutrients in the tree) found in original wood end grain surfaces. This is typical of known boxwood end-grained engravings of the period as reported by William Barlow. Plank grain woodcuts would not be likely to yield the fine detail seen on the Northern Liberties covers nor show the sieve tube or vessel markings typical of the hardwoods used for wood engraving. Mr. Barlow also concurred with the *Penny Post* article's conclusion that the deterioration of the marking over time suggested that the marking was of some other substance than metal.

In light of the above, a firm conclusion can be drawn that the Northern Liberties strikes seen on covers were produced by a wood engraving, presumably on the end-grain of a hard wood, such as boxwood, maple, ash, hickory or cherry.

How Was the Marking Applied?

The initial notice of the new marking is found in the October 10, 1835 *Saturday Courier*. This notice makes clear that the marking was "imprinted upon all letters deposited at his [McMakin's] office."

The use of the word "stamp" in the notice does not refer to an adhesive but to stamped impressions or handstamps as seen in numerous other documents prior to 1840. As the notice reported that letters were marked that "were deposited," it is clear that not all were written in the newsroom itself, but that the impressing was done there and not at a print shop. It also puts into question the concept of preprinted lettersheets. Nothing in McMakin's ads mentions preprinted stationery.

At least seven of the surviving covers (over one third) have their impressions imprinted after the letters were folded. Again, this argues against a preprinted lettersheet, but does not eliminate the possibility that some were available.

Imprinting can be done: a) at a print shop in advance, b) by use of a handstamp, c) by a notary type embosser, d) by a card press or e) a small hand press on premises.

The print shop method is ruled out by the fact that imprinting was done after being deposited and, in some cases, after folding. Richard Frajola makes the telling case against the use of a handstamp. He points out that all recorded examples are correctly oriented vertically on the covers, rather than some being at an angle. Some variation would be expected if a handstamp were used. If a notary-type impression were used, even if inked, it would almost certainly show an impression through the back of the cover, or impress deeper into the paper than has been observed. This leaves only an on-premises card press or small hand press as a possible source of the imprinting.

James Moran's *Printing Presses*, a 1973 publication of the University of California, devotes pages 227-52 to miniature, card, and proof presses. These date back many years before the American or French Revolutions, for Louis XIV and Mme. Pompadour used them to print cards as did Charles II of England.

J. Sutter, an early maker of linen markers such as found as postal markings on a number of stampless and stamped covers, apparently created the first real small hand press in the 1780s that could handle letter size paper. Moran reports that in 1834 Holtzappel & Co. was offering small presses on the *Stanhope* (and other) principle, while T. Cobb had a small *Columbian* press for making cards. No surviving example of the small *Columbian* card press survives, but there are two examples of the *Stanhope* variety, one of which is in Los Angeles.

By 1845, there was a small handpress in the New York postoffice, for Robert Morris used it to make the retained copies of his letters that are deposited in the Collectors Club of New York, which were the subject of Winthrop Boggs' 1960 book, *Postmaster Robert Morris of N.Y.*, and my two updating articles ("Postmaster Robert Morris Revisited," in the July and September 1984 issues of *Collectors Club Philatelist*).

In his July 1993 *Penny Post* letter on the Northern Liberties impressions, Mr. Barlow wondered if a current reexamination of several of the covers might show die impressions on other parts of the cover or set-offs from whatever might have served as the tympan of a hand or card press.

It is not clear whether a large number or just a few letter sheets may have been pre-imprinted for sale at the Northern Liberties News Rooms, as no ad mentions such a possibility; nevertheless, it is likely that some were.

Who Made the Marking?

Two suggestions have been put forth as to the printer or engraver involved in the Northern Liberties impressions. Mr. Frajola has suggested that printer John Rackstraw may have created it based upon several book plates owned by the Northern Liberties News Rooms, one of which shows him as the printer and the other that has no printer listed. This assumes that the markings were all on preprinted letter sheets, and not applied on premises. Mr. Rackstraw does not show up in the 1834 Philadelphia directory, but he is listed in the 1837 edition as a printer at 33 Kundle, living at Juliana and Buttonwood.

As the News Rooms continued for some years after the cover markings, it may well be that Mr. Rackstraw did book plates at a later stage, and was not involved at the time the Northern Liberties impressions were made. The use of an outside printer is inconsistent with the evidence that the marking was applied on premises as a number of the covers and the initial advertisement indicate.

The second suggestion was put forth by George Sloane and Elliott Perry based upon advertisements found by Sloane and Middendorf for the William F. Geddes firm. As they noted, the full page advertisements of Mr. Geddes in the city directories from 1837 to 1840 have in the corner a disk that is similar to the device imprinted on the Northern Liberties covers.

Mr. Geddes published the *Philadelphia Presbyterian* from his office on Library Street. As part of the firm were two engravers: Andrew Geddes (1783-1844) and James Geddes (1810-1850). They were both well known as engravers, and both fit into the proper period. However, neither had a significant reputation as a wood engraver, and that is a critical point.

Wood engraving, as opposed to whittling or wood carving, was not common in America in the early part of the 19th century. The earliest Philadelphia wood engraver was Frederick Reich, who did some crude wood engravings in the 1794-1804 period; however, he was no longer living in the 1830s.

Studies on American wood engraving list Dr. Alexander Anderson (1775-1870) as the father of the art. While he was born in Pennsylvania, he worked all his life in New York. Anderson taught his art to four major students, none of whom worked in Philadelphia. These were his daughter, Anna Anderson Maverick of New York, Garrett

Lansing of Albany and Boston, John Hall of Cooperstown, N.Y. (who gave up wood engraving by the early 1830s), and William Morgan of New York and Brooklyn.

The Philadelphia connection comes through Morgan, who had a pupil, George Gilbert, who did go to Philadelphia, but only after he had taught William Mason, who is noted as the first of the Philadelphia wood engravers. He began work there in 1810 and exhibited his engravings in that city in 1831.

There were a number of the Gilbert family listed as engravers in Philadelphia. In the 1834 city directory, George Gilbert was recorded as working at Chestnut, above 6th, and living at 434 York. The other major Gilbert was also a wood engraver, Reuben S. Gilbert, who was at 42 Prune. By the 1840s, Reuben Gilbert was part of the engraving and printing firm of Gilbert & Gihon, which is recorded from 1845 to 1860. In 1834, Mary Gihon was a bookbinder at 46 Cherry and by 1837 she was listed as the widow of James Gihon.

Either of the two Gilberts—George or Reuben—could have made the Northern Liberties marking. Both had the requisite talent and were in Philadelphia at the right time.

Mason was another possibility. He was alive and listed as a drawing master at 27 Sansom Street in the 1834 Philadelphia directory. Another wood engraver, Abraham J. Mason of England, came over to the U.S. in 1829, while Alva Mason, engraver, was listed in the 1834 city directory at 24 Greenleaf's Court.

In the 1838 *Brian's Wholesale Business Intelligencer* directory, twelve engraving firms were listed, including W. S. Mason's at 45 Chestnut. Only five wood engravers were recorded. These included Ruben S. Gilbert at 32 North, J.A. Woodside, Jr. at 6 North, J. Mass at 23 Perry, R.G. Harrison at 154 Wood and N. Johnson on Jane Street.

As a definitive answer as to who the wood engraver was, I think the 1838 *Philadelphia Circulating Business Directory*, printed by Robert S. Morris's Xylographic Press at 45 Chestnut Street, can be relied upon. This directory had a large number of business cards illustrated that were made from wood engravings (xylographically) that had characteristics of the Northern Liberties markings. Among the dozens of wood engraved cards with similarities were those of the City Hotel, Donahue & Co., W. Marshall, Cary Lea & Blanchard, and Hazan & Thompson. On page 107, William G. Mason is listed as engraver and printer of business cards, working at 46 Chestnut.

As the entire firm was devoted to printing from wood engravings, and as the wood engraver cited for cards such as were illustrated in it was William Mason, it seems clear he was the creator of the circular lathework type of xylographic engraving found on the Northern Liberties impression.

If the above is correct, then the Northern Liberties impressions are not only the earliest of the major fancy cancels, they are the finest, far surpassing the Waterbury corks, and they are the only ones made by a recognized artist. Mason is one of the top ten early wood engravers in America, well recognized in fine arts circles.

Classification Problems

To date there has been a problem of classifying the Northern Liberty impressions. As News Rooms imprints, they might be classed as the other known news rooms. In Kenneth Rowe's *Postal History of the Forwarding Agents*, Gilpins, Hudson's, Hale's and the Sun news rooms are listed as forwarders. The *American Stampless Cover Catalog* lists the Northern Liberty markings as handstamped locals. The *Scott Specialized Catalog* puts them in a group made up of locals, expresses and independent mails. Elliott Perry, George Sloane and Richard Frajola suggest they may be carrier markings. How does one tell?

The Northern Liberties impressions are clearly not expresses as they are not found on packages. If the Liberties are considered a separate town or city from Philadelphia, then the fact that the covers are carried to the Philadelphia postoffice before going to their destination makes them intercity mail or possibly way letters.

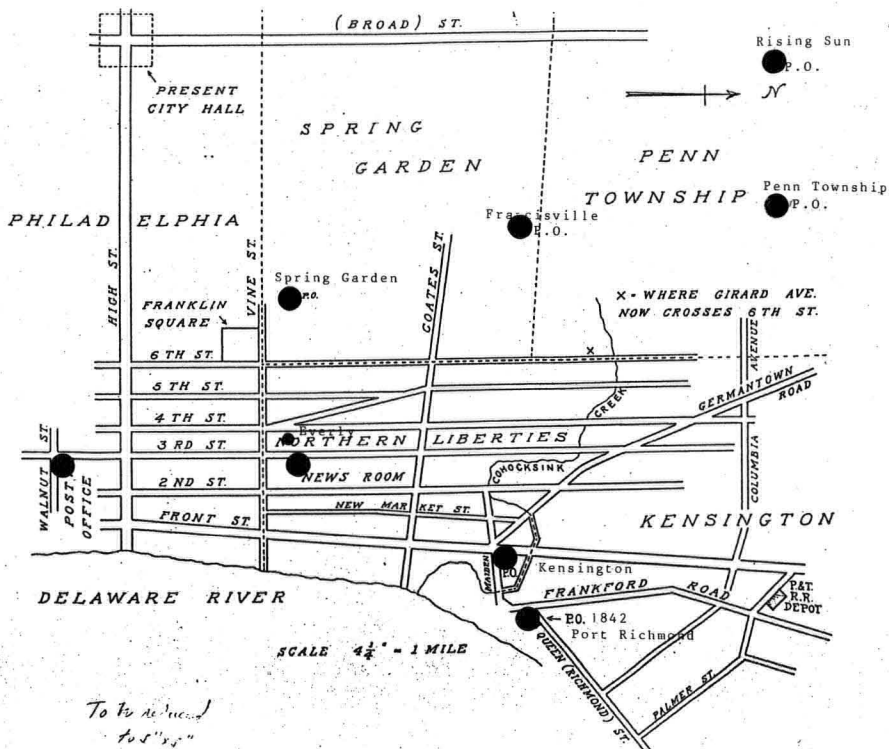


Figure 5. Map of Philadelphia, Northern Liberties and Kensington, from 1834 Philadelphia city directory

If all the activity took place only within the Northern Liberties, then they would be locals. The only intercity local reported is the Boyd's 3¢ rate to Brooklyn from New York.

The 1834 Philadelphia city directory gives a good map of the city, Northern Liberties and Kensington (Figure 5). The northern legal boundary of Philadelphia was Vine Street, which is the southern boundary of the Northern Liberties, which in 1834 had a population of 2,453, far below the 47,227 reported in the 1850 census. It was a rapidly growing population center.

The 1837 Philadelphia city directory reported the three closest postoffices. Northern Liberties never had a postoffice of its own from the 1830s on to the present. The main Philadelphia postoffice was at Merchant's Exchange, Walnut and South Third, the building pictured on the Blood's local "striding messenger" adhesives. To the west, Northern Liberties was bounded by Spring Garden, whose postoffice was on Callowhill Road, near Eighth. Penn Township, which did have a postoffice in the 1830s was even further west. The eastern boundary was Kensington, whose postoffice was at Meriden, near Market.

Carrier Operations

By 1828, carrier service was well established in Philadelphia with carriers serving all of the old city from the Delaware River west to Broad Street as well as, "the populous parts of the Northern Liberties and Southwark." This means that Northern Liberties, while being outside the legal city limits, was considered within the postal city limits.

By 1835, the *DeSilver* city directory reported seven individuals serving as letter carriers in Philadelphia (compared with 15 for New York). The Philadelphia carriers were: Thomas F. Goodwin, 174 S. 9th; Josiah Johnson, 22 Little George; C. J. Calliday, 289 S. 10th; Samuel Cook, 7th below Noble; Henry Hannings, 24 Logan; Thomas Lloyd at

Workman's Court; and finally Daniel Everly at 107 Dilwyn. Everly's home is less than two blocks from the Northern Liberties News Rooms address and one block closer to the Vine Street boundary. He lived inside Northern Liberties between N. 3rd and N. 4th. Everly would be the carrier serving the Northern Liberties during the period of the Northern Liberties postal impressions.

In a seminal series on carrier services in *Chronicle* (11/73 - 11/74), I noted that Barnabas Bates, Assistant Postmaster of New York, had indicated that carrier pickups were accepted at the carriers' homes by the late 1820s. The *New York Annual Register* for 1834 reports as follows on the system then in effect:

The "Letter Carriers' Department" is under Elias Lynch, and has fifteen carriers connected with him, who deliver letters and papers to all persons whose residences are known (and have not boxes,) twice a day between the months of March and September. Boxes are placed by the Carriers in the upper part of the city, where they receive letters and deliver them every day (except Sundays) at one o'clock, to the Post Office, in time for the afternoon mails, for which they charge two cents each. Letters for the city deposited in the Post Office before one o'clock, P.M., are delivered the same day.

This notice about carrier boxes continued through the 1836 edition, but in the 1837 *New York Annual Resister*, the remarks about establishing carrier boxes was eliminated and a new notice about a branch post office at William and Exchange Place added. A fee structure of two cents each on all letters and a half cent each on all newspapers was imposed, while a charge of one cent each was put on all letters received at the branch office to be deposited at the main office. The parallel to the Northern Liberties markings period of operation seems obvious. It does not imply that the locations where boxes were located, such as hotels, received any compensation unless the carrier split his fee.

The Sub-Post Office

A critical fact about the Northern Liberties impressions is that they read, "N.L. News Rooms,/VIA/Sub Post Office/213 North Third St." This strongly suggests some connection with Daniel Everly as the Northern Liberties mail carrier or "penny post," and the ability Everly had to establish a box on his route or at his nearby home. If the same ruling that New York employed operated in Philadelphia, Mr. Everly was entitled to 2¢ for each letter he delivered to the Merchant's Exchange main Philadelphia postoffice. If having a box located in the reading room would more than double the number of letters involved, it would be in his economic interest to split his 2¢ with McMakin.

Support for this concept is found in the *Saturday Courier* of January 23, 1836 where there was an editorial complaint from the weekly paper's publisher (who may have been McMakin by this date) that letters were being deposited in its letter box, and that if the public continued to treat the letter box as a "sub-Post Office," the paper expected to be financially compensated for taking the letters to the Merchant's Exchange postoffice. (Figure 6).

The idea of "sub-postoffices" was first put forth by Elliott Perry and George Sloane and later supported by Richard Frajola. As the term is not found in any reported postal law or regulation, I was resistant to the idea at first, but then realized it did fit with what I knew of the New York carrier system and had reported in *Chronicle* #80, albeit under a new and different name. Philadelphia, so far, is the only city to use this particular "sub-post office" phraseology.

The concept of a sub-postoffice also explains how McMakin could be compensated for the effort of creating a "stamp" and using his News Rooms as a deposit box. It throws into question the five cent rate that Kleemann reported was remembered by an old gentleman when Kleemann questioned him around 1905. However, McMakin would only be compensated if Everly split his fee. The January 23, 1836 editorial comment seems to indicate this had not occurred by that date.

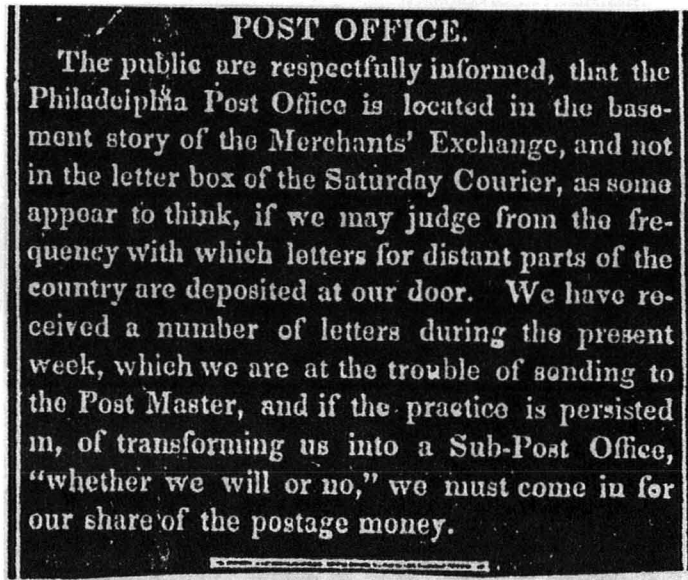


Figure 6. Editorial in *Saturday Courier* Jan. 23, 1836, referring to the public's treatment of the paper (and News Rooms) as a "sub-post office"

Summary

The Northern Liberty impressions were developed by Andrew McMakin as a promotional device for his Northern Liberties News Rooms located in his "hotel" or tavern. They were introduced just prior to Saturday, October 10, 1835 and lasted through May 21, 1836 if not a bit longer. About twenty examples have survived, with two different styles known.

The marking or stamp is a wood engraving created by one of the ten masters of American wood engraving, William Mason, and imprinted onto letters deposited at the News Rooms. They were probably impressed by a small hand proof press, for a card press would have been too small.

The impressions are the most ornate U.S. postal markings of the classic period and are the earliest non-manuscript markings suggesting carrier service in U.S. postal history. The marking, itself, was not applied by a carrier, but like hotel markings of a few years later, suggests carrier service. The proprietor of the Northern Liberties hotel and News Rooms and carrier Everly may well have split the 2¢ carrier fee authorized in 1834 for carrier pickup, although there is evidence that this did not occur as late as January 23, 1836. The McMakins operated a number of inns or taverns but there is no indication they attempted a News Room at their Callowhill Road tavern or the Bath Coffee House or the tavern on the South Wharf. Further, when McMakin resumed control over the Northern Liberties News Rooms in 1840 there was no further attempt at a "sub-postoffice." □

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AUTHENTICATING THE BINGHAMTON HERRINGBONE KILLERS

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The Binghamton, N.Y. herringbone killer is only known used during the 1847 issue period. There were two postmasters during this time. The first was J.H.A. Park, who served until May 15, 1849. He only used red circular date stamps (cds) during the months in question.

Unless some stamps were carried in or an order was received from another nearby town, Park's first 1847 stamp order was received December 15, 1847 when he got 100 10s and 400 5s. A second order of 500 5s was received March 4, 1848, while an additional 1,000 were received June 12, 1848, with a second 1,000 on March 17, 1849. Any 5¢ stamps would have to be of the first or second printing.

Taking over on May 16, 1849 was Benjamin T. Cooke. He used a black all-capitals straightline on the 17th and 18th (Figure 1), reverting to a red cds on the 24th with a separate large "5" handstamp rate. The straightline has previously been misidentified in catalogs for some years due to a misreading of notes of mine apparently used without permission. There is a red upper and lower case straightline of May 23rd on an undated cover with a handstamp red "5" rate, but the style of the "5" suggests this is the unpaid rate of 1851.

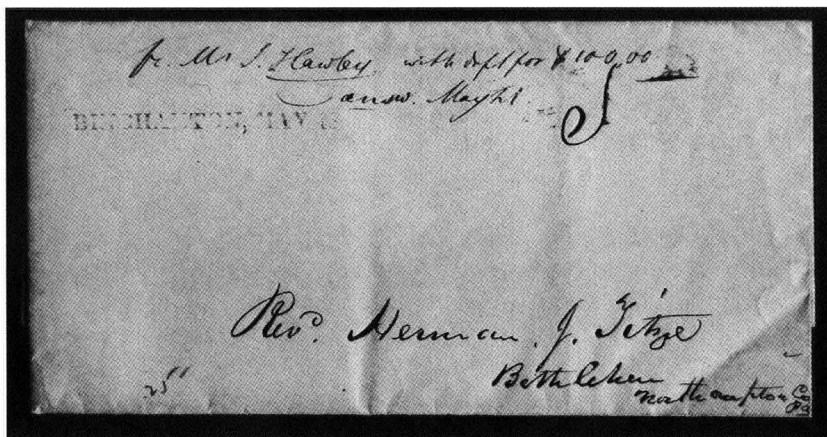


Figure 1. Black straightline handstamp, Binghamton, N.Y., May 18, 1849

Cooke received 1,000 5¢ 1847s on July 12, 1849, a second 1,000 on October 20, 1849—both from the badly printed 3rd printing. On May 4, 1850 an additional 1,000 5s were received and another 2,000 on November 8, 1850 (at which time he also received his only shipment of 10¢ - 100), all from the 4th printing. Finally, on May 22, 1851 he received 500 5s from the last chrome orange printing. Thus, the total was 7,400 5¢ stamps altogether and 200 10s. The shades of the 5¢ stamps are important in determining whether they belong, as is the fact that only 200 10¢ 1847s were ordered, half in November 1850.

In *Chronicle* #95, Creighton C. Hart gave a detailed report on the Binghamton, N.Y. 1847 covers, including those with herringbone killers. He reported on 53 covers. Of these he felt 24 were likely to be genuine or already had been so certified. He also concluded the herringbone killer was no longer used after sometime in December 1849 and that the Clapp correspondence was one that had been tampered with by fakers. To his list of covers a few emendations or corrections are useful.

Unless there are two 1847 covers to Jonathan Edwards, Hart's #1 cover is actually dated 10/23 not 10/28. The October 23 dated item is illustrated in the 3/21/1952 Kelleher sale, which notes the contents are a letter from Abner Doubleday of baseball fame. Despite being authenticated, this cover is suspect, for the date is prior to the Official Record Book's date for orders and receipts of 1847s at Binghamton, although one might have been carried in. But, why would a cover at this date receive a herringbone killer?

There are three ex-Matthies covers. Hart's cover #2 (12/29/47 A.C. Flagg) is from the comptroller's correspondence and is creased through the stamp, which is a first printing shade, confining its authenticity. Hart's #3 (5/2/48 State Engineer & Surveyor) also bears a dark, rich shade indicating early use. Hart's #8 cover (11/20/48 Richard McElligott) was skillfully repaired along the left side, as Hart mentioned. Matthies was one of the most astute collectors of her era and the fact that she settled for 3-margin stamps suggests a possible problem with 4-margin examples of the 1847 with herringbone killers.

Hart's cover #4, the green July 26 item to C.G. Havens, was placed in the John Pope holding sold by John Fox in the Pope dispersal. Its authenticity is supported by two covers from the Roseboom correspondence: Hart's #17, ex-Brigham item, also dated July 26, as well as a July 25th item, not recorded by Hart, that sold in the Kelleher sale of 12/1/1950 and is illustrated there.

Hart's cover #5 (10/17/48 Sarah Roseboom) is signed by Warren Colson. His covers #6 (11/2/48 S. Thompson Nephew) and #7 (11/13/48 Miss. Roseboom) were in the "Sierra Madre" holding sold by Robert Kaufmann, with both selling to Andrew Levitt. The #7 cover was from the "Ring" collection and is a Roseboom item. Covers #12 (6/6/49 with black herringbone) and #13 (11/23/49) were in the Newbury holding. The first of these two Roseboom items sold to the Weill brothers and the second to John Fox.

Returning to #7, this is one of three covers I record with a herringbone killer used to obliterate a stampless rate. On this cover it kills a large stampless stripped diagonal "V" rate that is recorded used August through October 1847, making Hart's November 13, 1848 attribution a year late and also raising the question of why the herringbone was available this early.

The second of the stampless obliterator covers is #16 (4/16/-), the ex-Meroni cover dated April 28th addressed to Roseboom and sold by John Fox. This cover has a red herringbone killer on the adhesive as well as one obliterating a tall, hollow "V" handstamp that is known in the February through April 1849 period, suggesting an 1849 date for cover #16.

The third stampless obliterator cover is a stampless cover to George Lucas in Baltimore, dated July 16, 1849. It bears a red herringbone killing a "V" rate to rerate the cover with a hollow "X" rate for over 300 miles. Finally, the Table I Hart cover dated September 15 and addressed to Roseboom is ex-Norcross and West.

Hart's #2 cover in Table II is to Samuel Geech, not Teech, as a long loop below the letter shows. While Hart gives this item a February 7th date, it is February 5th according to the illustration, unless there are two items with Binghamton herringbones on 1847s to Geech. Hart's #11 cover in this Table II is to Rosa Clapp and is dated June 15. It had a 1950 certificate of genuineness but Hart suggested reexamination probably because Clapp covers are known to have been faked. Hart did not report that the adhesive on it was a large right sheet margin position piece 1847, tied by a black herringbone, not a likely choice for forging.

Additional Listings

As noted above, there is an additional green July 25 herringbone cover to Roseboom. Other new listings include a November 6, 1848 cover to Millard Fillmore from the comptroller's find. The stamp is positioned sideways and has a crease running through it.

It sold as lot 640 in the Siegel Judge Fay sale catalog. There is also a December 29 (1849) example to Miss Roseboom with a red cds and red herringbone that was sold in the Ward West sale.

A black herringbone cover to Sarah Clapp, dated July 20, sold in the Barr sale of 1/14/1948 to "E.K." (not Knapp or Eugene Klein, both of whom had already died.) A July 9th Clapp cover with a red cds and black herringbone killer that tied the stamp and cut into the envelope sold as lot 106 in the John Fox sale of 3/24/1958. It is currently undergoing expertization. The Paige sale of 4/4/1954 of the Frederick S. Whitney holding had a cover dated 12/May with a blue cds and circular blue grid, that dates it to May 1851. The stamp is not tied and the cover is not listed in Hart's Table III.

Two Valentine covers need to be considered at this point. There is a black herringbone with a February 14th date addressed to Martha Wilber, Oakham, Mass. It is suspect as it also has an unpaid handstamp "5" rate style dating it into 1852 or later. It was in the Pope collection sold by John Fox. The second is the Table I #15 cover that Hart described as having a blue herringbone and addressed to Miss Elizabeth. This cover was offered in the John Fox Pope II sale, so described but not illustrated. If the description is accurate, it changes Hart's conclusion as to the herringbone use ending in December 1849. However, in the Siegel sale of 10/22/1968 there is a cover, also addressed to Miss Elizabeth—, Sugarloaf, N.Y. which is described as having a red cds and red herringbone. Are there two almost identical covers to Miss Elizabeth—, Sugarloaf or do we have a recording error in terms of herringbone color?

With the additions mentioned above, the Binghamton total of 1847 covers reaches 60, almost 15% more than Hart reported. While there are probably a few more items not yet recorded, the 60 is a list of the vast majority of Binghamton 1847 covers and a valid selection for analysis.

Forgery Characteristics

Hart listed 24 covers that he felt were bad, or which had been given bad certificates. He noted that all of them had "great eye appeal" with 4-margin stamps on the upper right side situated in an upright position. Most were on undated envelopes or folded letter covers and all were clearly tied by herringbone killers. He added that all seemed to stem from one source, and to have been created by one person, a stamp professional, who had access to genuine covers. They came to market at the end of World War II, a time when postal history collecting and exhibiting was just coming into its own.

The finger that Hart pointed was aimed at John A. Fox, who handled many of the covers and who was for a time the leading cover dealer in America. Forgery equipment was found in his basement following his death. Hart stated there were "two or three inconspicuous differences that are consistent" that help identify these covers, but declined to specify them.

John Fox both created completely bogus covers and altered genuine material. The fakes he made of Confederate material were discussed in a series of Philatelic Foundation pamphlets in the 1977-1983 period. Discussing the bogus covers, Confederate specialist Brian Green stated,

The fraudulent addresses were generally copies from genuine covers. Because they were written by a single hand, they have a similar angle and general appearance, often with some of the letters not connected. . . Many of the covers appear to opened on the left side.

As with Jean de Sperati's counterfeit stamps, a photographic process was used to produce fraudulent cancellations for these covers. The cancellations generally have a watery look, a less intense tone to the black inks, a flat appearance, and slightly thicker lettering. Any "breaks" found on the original cancellation used to make the fraudulent one would be reproduced. Sometimes the result would be "impossible" uses. . . .



Figure 2. Binghamton, N.Y., herringbone cancel on 5¢ 1847, July 29 cds, addressed to Rev. Frederick Connell, suspected John Fox forgery

The Frederick Connell July 29th cover, #12 in Hart's Table II list of suspect material, exhibits all these characteristics (Figure 2) . Note that all the letters slant to the right, as Green found on Fox's Confederate bogus material. This Connell cover was purchased by Hart as a souvenir of the sheriff's sale of John Fox's material on January 2, 1974. Two other Connell covers were also in that sale, both Huntsville, Alabama 1847 uses with fancy killers. One had "breaks" in the lettering equal to the Connell of Figure 2, the other had somewhat less breaks.

Two other Binghamton herringbone covers were also sold in this sale at very deflated prices. One was #4 in Hart's Table II list of suspect material and was a 5¢ 1847 on a February 12 Valentine date to Henry Farnum at Philadelphia, with the 5¢ tied by a black herringbone killer. This is the third herringbone Valentine cover associated with John Fox. The second sheriff's sale herringbone was a single 10¢ 1847 cover to Miss Fannie C. Morhinse (misspelled Mosher in Hart's 10¢ list), dated February 23rd. Both showed a more even flow of writing ink in the address than in the case of Figure 2.

Only one of Hart's suspects was not a black herringbone item. This was his Table II item #1 to Mrs. Cynthia Leonard, Sheffield, Mass., dated February 24, 1848. It had a blue herringbone. Are only black herringbone Binghamton 1847s suspect? There is evidence that this is not so.

From dozens of hours of discussion with John Fox, I concluded that he was very knowledgeable in U. S. postal history. He also demonstrated a good deal of respect for philatelic students and a complete, barely masked, contempt for wealthy, non-student collectors who wanted "impossible" appearing covers such as he supplied. Why he made bogus covers or what those covers looked like was never discussed. However, I did learn that he had genuine cakes of both red and blue inks that were contemporaneous with the Civil War.

Many of the Fox bogus covers have characteristics that reveal themselves to careful students. It was almost as though he expected them to be identified in the future. For example, a block of four 10¢ Confederates (supposedly used to pay the trans-Mississippi

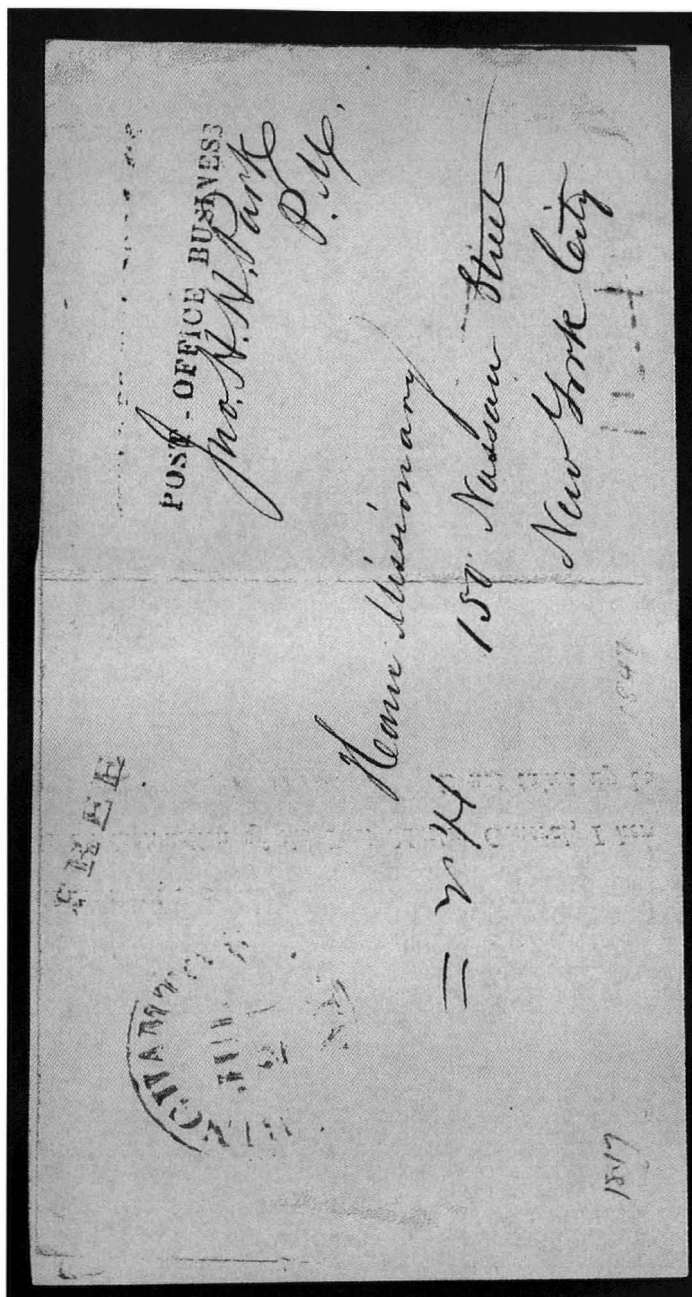


Figure 3. July 21, 1847 stampless free cover from PM Park, Binghamton, NY, which displays both blue and red handstamp markings

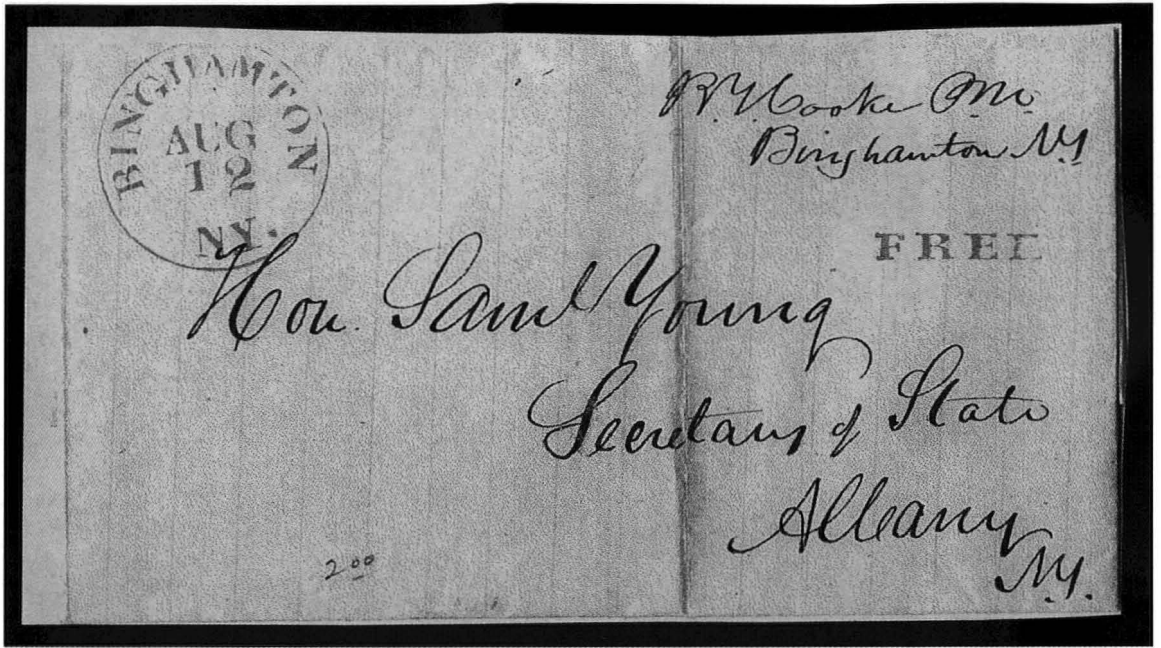


Figure 4. Stampless cover, free frank of PM Cooke, Binghamton, N.Y., Aug 12 (no year date)

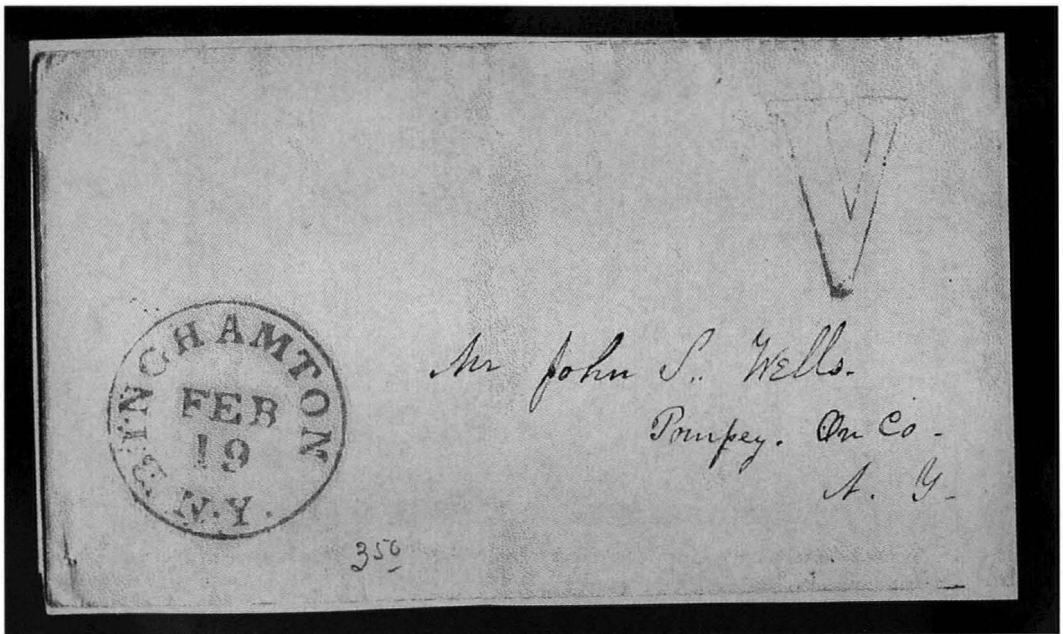


Figure 5. Stampless cover, 31 mm cds of Binghamton, N.Y., Feb 19 (no year date)

rate) postmarked at Mobile, Alabama and addressed to Amarillo, Texas was a fake that fooled several experts although it shouldn't. Amarillo was a cattle drive rail-head town founded in the 1880s. Even the county's first settlements were after the Civil War so the cover is an impossibility. In another case Fox made up 3-4 covers postmarked the same date from different towns to the same addressee. Even traveling salesmen couldn't move fast enough to accomplish this.

Hart, like most collectors, relied upon experts for his opinions on the genuineness of Binghamton herringbone covers. However, experts can be wrong, as the best of them admit. Further, the information available at different times may cause an opinion to be reversed. For example, in evaluating the Hart #1 cover, the Jonathan Edwards item, did the experts who gave it a good opinion ask themselves why a herringbone killer was used at this Broome county seat town before 1847s were ordered from Washington? What was the herringbone supposed to kill? Are we to believe a new killer was brought in to kill the occasional 1847 stamp that "might" be carried into Binghamton this early?

Once the extent of Mr. Fox's activities was discovered in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a "Fox panic" began among collectors and experts. However, he still had a group of devoted, wealthy collector-followers who continued to patronize and believe in him almost to the end of his life. He was a charming and convincing fellow. The panic occurred when some of the collectors who had bought Fox material attempted to dispose of it. Others questioned everything he sold them. In the expertizing community, heavy scrutiny was given everything he had handled that came in for certificates; no benefit of the doubt was given. This led to condemnation of material that was good and reversals of opinion on those occasions a Fox-handled item was shown not only not to be a fake but not possible to fake.

Until the discovery of the Fox forgery equipment after his death, I was the owner of the only certified "fake" that could be directly attributed to Fox. He had made it for me using one of his linen markers and black ink. A poor strike, but the ink was hardly the "less intense" black described as typical of his fakes. It has been in my possession for the past 30 plus years.

Stampless Binghamton Evidence

Figure 3 is a stampless cover franked by postmaster Park who originated the "herringbones." It bears a red 30½ mm cds dated JUL/21/N.Y. as well as a straightline FREE and a blue POST-OFFICE BUSINESS strike and is docketed 1847. It demonstrates that both blue and red inks were available as handstamp or cancel colors from the beginning of the herringbone period.

Figure 4 is an undated cover franked by Benjamin Cooke, who took office May 16, 1849. It bears a cds dated AUG/12, identical to the one used by Park, as well as an identical FREE, both in an unusual shade of red. It is the latest example of the Figure 3 style I have recorded stampless; therefore it is probably August 1849. Note that in both illustrations the "N.Y." letters are close together with the periods lining up with the bottom. There is a later 31 mm cds, but it differs in the size and characteristics of the "N.Y."

A new cds was introduced definitely by October 1847 and probably as early as January. It is 31 mm in size and the letters "N.Y." are close to the BINGHAMTON at left, with the period after "N" positioned high (Figure 5). It is the cds used on most Roseboom herringbone covers. A day over month date style was introduced in November 1849 and became common thereafter. Only these two styles of cds were used during the term of Park's service as postmaster. Examples, however, are found later. A blue version is known as early as April 1851 when blue town markings began to be introduced. It has a day over month date style. Even later a red version is known, with month over day. Figure 6 shows it on an undated newspaper wrapper with a fancy scroll PAID over 3 rate, otherwise recorded in black in 1853-55. Note the rim is beginning to break under the "B" as well as



Figure 6. Undated newspaper wrapper, Binghamton, N.Y., red cds of Mar 3 (no year date), fancy scroll PAID over 3 rate

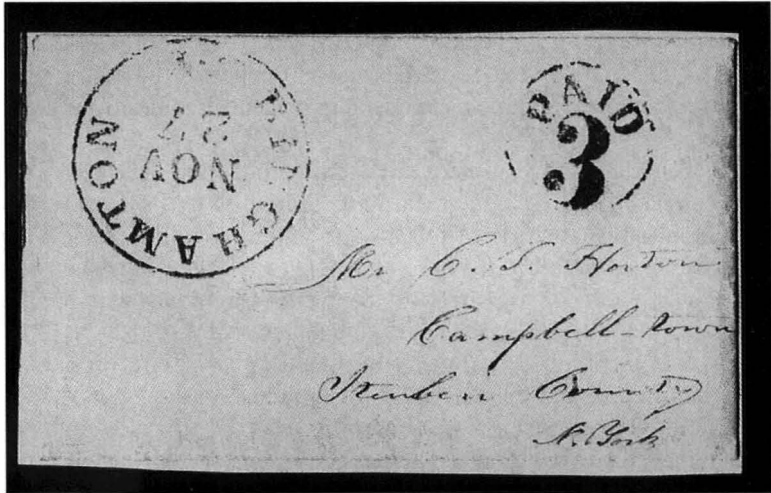


Figure 7. Binghamton, N.Y. stampless cover with Nov 27 cds (no year date), PAID/3 in circle



Figure 8. Binghamton, N.Y. stampless cover, red 34 mm day over month cds of 17 Dec, with "5" rate in cds under the date

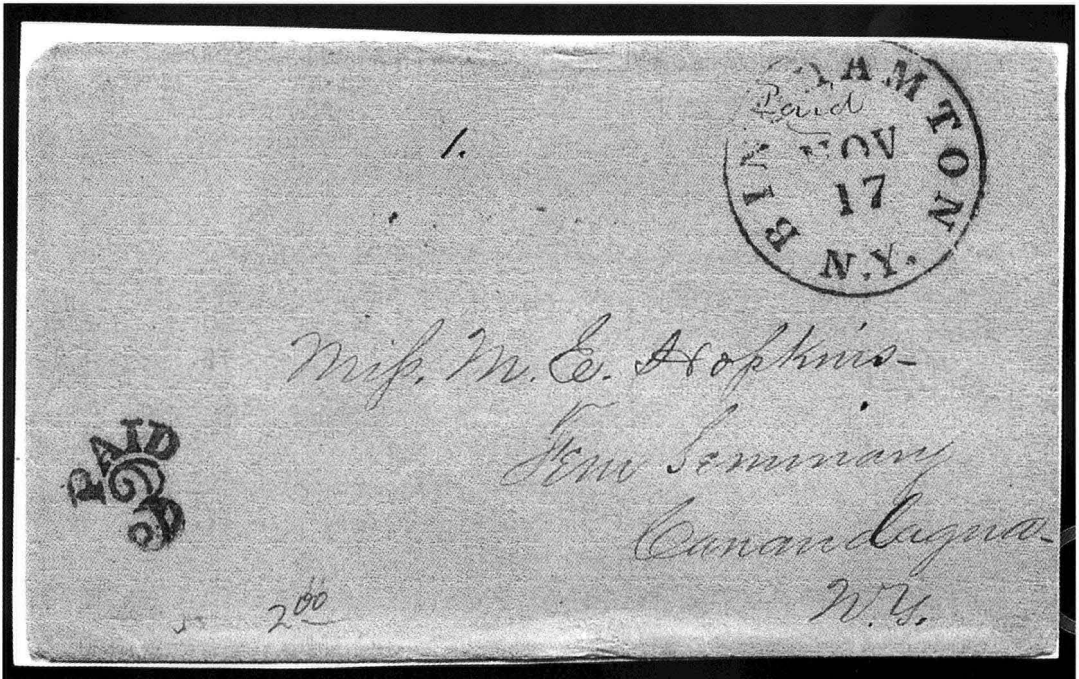


Figure 9. Binghamton, N.Y. stampless cover, 34 mm month over day cds of Nov 17, rating mark not integral with cds

the "N" of "N.Y." An even later undated cover is found in black with an encircled PAID/3. In this the break under the "N" is clear, as is the one over the "B." While the encircled PAID/3 is common stampless the style was not introduced at Binghamton until November 1853 (Figure 7). By noting the rim breaks it is possible to determine if a late cds was used to create a Binghamton herringbone cover.

Another cds was introduced in mid-December 1850 and seems to be the only one used through mid-February 1851. It is a red 34 mm cds with a 5 in the middle under the date (Figure 8). Finally, a new 34 mm cds (Figure 9) was introduced which is known in red, blue and black, with the latter being 1854-55. Although I cannot definitely date an example prior to 1853, the cds could have been introduced in the fall of 1851. The problem is that too many stampless covers, like those with stamps, had their contents removed.

Also in the 1852-55 period, a red straightline was introduced. It is in upper and lower case style used in May. One copy is still stampless and the other has a 5¢ 1847 adhesive added and tied by a pen cancel. It was listed as an odd item by Hart in his Binghamton study.

Reaching Conclusions

The discussion so far has supplied data to reach conclusions. The small quantity of issued 10¢ 1847s suggest none, or very few, would exist with a Binghamton herringbone, a conclusion reached by Hart. The shipment data suggests that detection of out-of-period 5¢ 1847 use can help determine if a stamp is substituted or added. A question about Hart's #1 cover is also raised, along with the straightline manuscript killed 1847. The cds dating data is useful to determine if a later cover has been used for an early period. The stampless use of blue as an auxiliary strike confirms the likeliness of genuineness of blue herringbones. The normal use of blue cds strikes only in 1851 raise questions about the Paige sale item. The discussion of Fox forgeries indicates that he tried to get 4-margin stamps, which are otherwise rare with herringbones but not impossible. His writing characteristics eliminate a few items from consideration of genuineness. However, the flatness of impression on black herringbones is not proof of faking. The original lampblack inks also had this smooth flat look, as seen on the black Binghamtons of the 1850s. □

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QUINTESSENTIAL COVERS: PART VI
VAN KOPPERSMITH

Section Editor's Note: This is part six in the series "Quintessential Covers" (see *Chronicle* Nos. 162-166, May 1994-May 1995). A quintessential cover is highly desirable and collectible for a number of compelling reasons—not merely another attractive and presentable example of a certain stamp used on cover. As defined, a quintessential cover commonly is unique in several of its aspects, and in its combination of stamp varieties and usages is matchless and clearly "one of a kind." The previous articles in this series were written by your Section Editor; thus, this is the first to be submitted by another member, in this case by the current President of our Society. Other members are invited to submit their own candidates for inclusion as a quintessential cover in this series. - HCS

The cover considered here (see Figure 1) could be described as follows: "1c blue imperforate, Type IV [Scott No. 9]; three singles tied by two 'MOBILE Ala./SEP/9' circular datestamps on blue outer folded lettersheet; 1853 docketing on reverse; vertical file fold, affecting center stamp only." As such, it is not very remarkable and certainly not a quintessential cover. Fortunately, as closer examination shows, this is not the case and the cover exhibits several unusual aspects of plate varieties, usage and clerical handling of the adhesive stamps.

The early stamps issued by the United States, including these, were imperforate. They were separated as best possible, with scissors or knife, or sometimes by tearing them



Figure 1. The folded letter sheet here described, originating in New Orleans but post-marked at Mobile on "SEP/9 [1853]"; addressed to "Boston, Mass.;" and franked with three 1¢ stamps, Type IV, recut, from the late state of Plate 1.

apart. Thus, many examples exist of poorly separated stamps with little or no margins or with the design cut into on one or more sides. The condition of stamps was not a problem for contemporary postal clerks or their customers as they had no reason to be concerned about future generations of collectors. However, it was time consuming and a bother to find a pair of scissors and cut one or more stamps from the sheet for each letter mailed.

Close examination reveals that the 1¢ stamps on this cover are not three singles, but actually a strip of three with a scissors cut extending from the bottom to within two to three millimeters of the top between each two stamps (see Figure 2). Further study indicates that most probably this was a full strip of ten stamps [one horizontal row], carefully cut apart to within a few millimeters at the top, such that single stamps, or strips, could easily be separated from the longer strip, as required, without any further need for scissors. Thus, a very clever clerk or a frequent user of stamps solved their stamp separation problem efficiently. Note that this innovation was several years earlier than the first experimentation on separating stamps by perforating them took place in the U.S.



Figure 2. Enlarged photograph of the three stamps, revealing them to be a strip of three stamps partially severed and embossed with a grilling device that breaks and penetrates the surface of the stamps. Note the tiny traces of the top portion of the “B” relief visible in the bottom center margin of the third stamp in the strip.

Additional close examination reveals that each of the stamps is “tied” to the letter sheet by a penetrating grill pattern similar to that produced by the devices used to impress and affix wax seals (refer to Figure 2). This folded letter does bear a wax seal [on reverse as usual] but the grill pattern is slightly larger (diameter 18 mm) than the pattern present on the three stamps (16 mm). Also, the penetrating holes are somewhat larger on the stamps; this may be because the grilling device was directly in contact with the stamps rather than separated by the thin wax wafer. As it must have been awkward to moisten and affix the partially severed strip of three stamps, the impressing device may have been used to help bind the stamps to the letter sheet. The impression is strong and is clearly visible on the inside of the address sheet of the letter.

Still further examination reveals a slight double transfer at the bottom and the top of the center stamp. Mark Rogers has plated these stamps as positions 97-99R1⁴; thus, the middle three of five very interesting positions on Plate 1. In the initial state [Plate 1 Early],

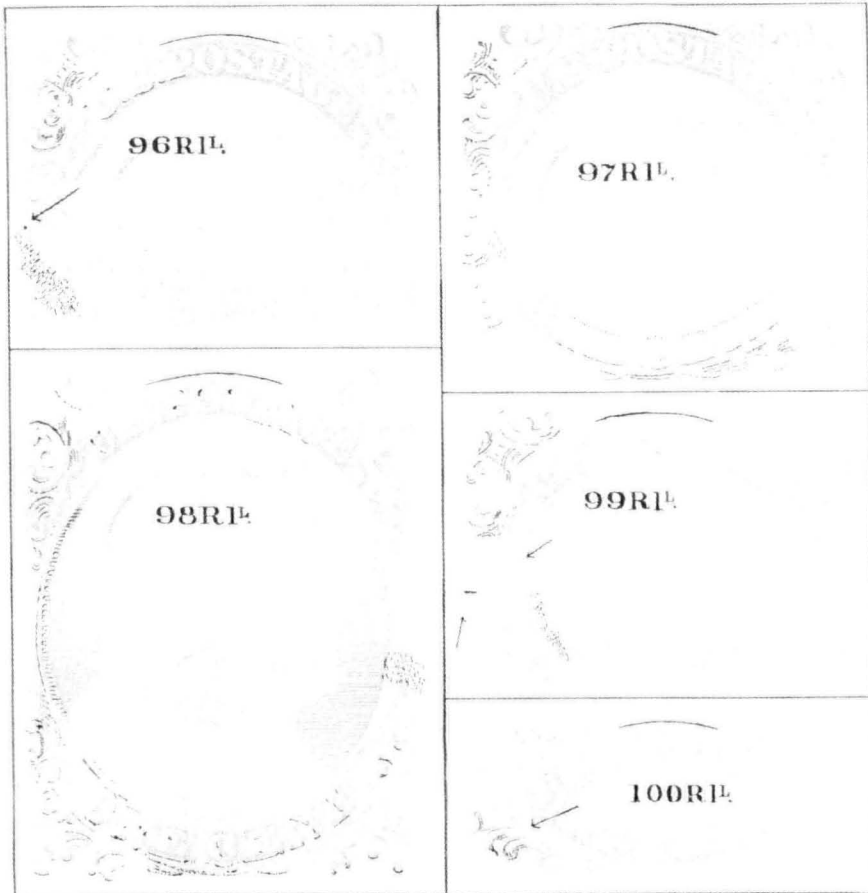


Figure 4. Drawings from the “misplaced relief” positions including the three middle positions [97-98-99R1^L] corresponding to the strip of three stamps here described after re-entry and recutting when the plate was modified to the late state of Plate 1. Note the double transfers, top and bottom, in position 98R and other characteristics of the reworked plate positions. Caution: Though all five are labeled “Relief B” in this figure, only positions 96 and 97 were re-entered with the “B” relief; the other positions retain the “A” relief design. All five, however were recut and differ in this respect from the Plate 1 Early stamps. [from Neinken, p. 142]



Figure 3. Drawings of 97-98-99R1^E from the “misplaced relief” positions on Plate 1 Early corresponding to the three stamps from Plate 1 Late as illustrated in Figure 2. [after Ashbrook / Neinken]

positions 96-100 in the right pane are misplaced A relief positions¹ (see Figure 3). The other fifteen, 91-95^R and 91-100^L, were entered [as was normal] from the bottom relief on the transfer roll, the “B” relief. As these three positions [of five] were entered with the “A” relief and the “B” relief was very close and below the “A” relief on the roller, traces of the top of the “B” relief can be seen in the ample selvage beneath these three stamps. This has been termed “the 11th row effect.” Additionally, “When the plate was reconditioned (Pl.1L) in the Spring of 1852, 96 and 97R were re-entered with the ‘B’ relief.”² Consequently, 97R1^L was altered by entering a “B” relief over the “A” relief, one of only two such positions on the plate (see Figure 4).

There is yet another interesting aspect to this cover. The circular datestamp was used for only a brief time, September 1853 to March 1854. The slug present beneath the date was not substituted for the year, as Mobile did not include the year in their datestamps until a few years later. Instead, the slug replaced an integral rate marking (5 or 10). Though the date on this letter is early in September, usage as early as September 2 is noted.

As a final note, there well may be similar covers in existence—look for them. Unfortunately, a thorough search of my own collection was not successful; but, as you look, do not confine your own search to Mobile postmarked covers or 1¢ stamps on cover. Examine New Orleans covers from this time period as well, as the cover described above is docketed “E. A. Searle/New Orleans/Sept 7th 1853.” There are many letters postmarked in Mobile during this time period that originated in New Orleans, but that is another interesting subject for a later article.

Lastly, the writer is indebted to Mark Rogers, of Austin, Texas, for plating the strip of three stamps and to Edgar W. Jatho, Jr., of New Orleans, Louisiana, who produced the excellent computer-generated images for the illustrations in this article. □

¹Mortimer L. Neinken, *The United States One Cent Stamp of 1851 to 1861* ([New York]: U. S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1972) [xix + 552 pp., illus.], Chapter X.

²*Ibid.*, p. 552.

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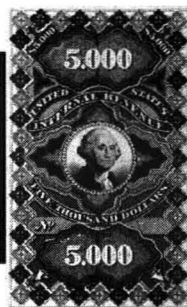
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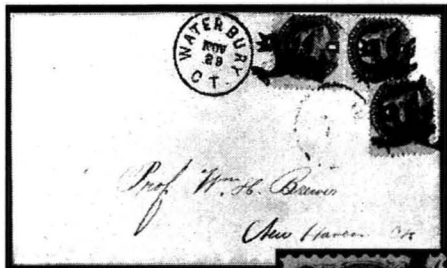
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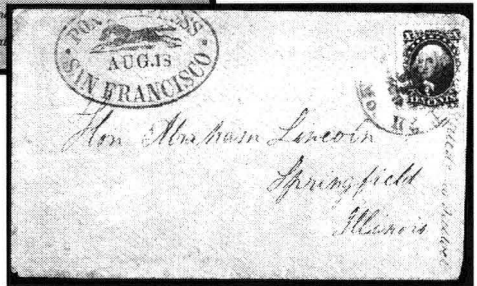
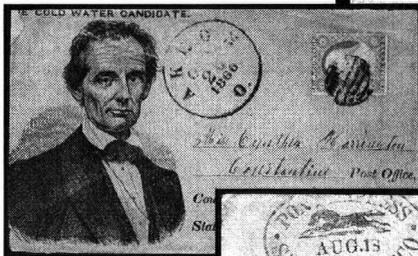
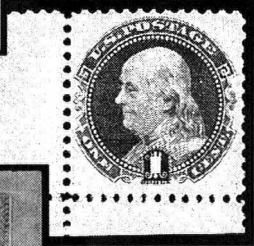
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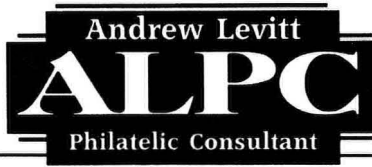
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USAGES OF OFFICIAL STAMPS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., 1877-1884 ALAN C. CAMPBELL

The period from March 3, 1877, when the use of penalty envelopes was first authorized, to July 5, 1884, when the use of official stamps was finally discontinued, has been called the transitional period, when penalty envelopes and official stamps were used simultaneously. During this time, official penalty mail out of the nation's capital required supplemental stamps only to pay the registry fee or for foreign postage. One might have forecast that the ease and convenience of using penalty envelopes would have been immediately apparent to all departments, so that after a brief conversion period, in which the remaining supplies of envelopes were used up, official stamps would henceforth be used only on registered or foreign mail. While the new penalty envelopes did cause a dramatic and precipitous decline in the use of official stamps out of Washington, D.C., limited usage there persisted. The purpose of this article is to analyze the different types of mail posted with official stamps in Washington, D.C. during the transitional period, and to explain as best as possible why the departments responded differently in converting over to the exclusive use of penalty envelopes.

Luff cited the report of the Third Assistant Postmaster General for the fiscal year ending 1877 (in which revenues for official stamps dropped from \$1,281,389.43 the previous year to \$370,737.48) as dramatic evidence of the wholesale conversion to the use of penalty envelopes.¹ Yet if we compare the official postage requisitions for 1876 and 1877, we find that only the Department of the Interior ordered less cumulative official postage than the previous year. A more plausible explanation is that the Third Assistant Postmaster General sought a convenient excuse for his deficit, and was being disingenuous in not mentioning that effective August 15, 1876, the departments could requisition their postage directly from the Post Office Department without paying for it, the cost then being credited by the Treasury to the POD's annual appropriation.

It is worth emphasizing that the new penalty envelopes were embraced by the departments not for the savings in postage *per se* but for the mailroom convenience of no longer having to weigh letters and affix the appropriate postage. Warren Howard's recent article brought to light the hidden costs of using official stamps: the salaries of clerks to disburse the stamps, the costs of safes and postage scales, etc.² These costs were incrementally negligible but cumulatively significant. In the long run, converting to penalty envelopes would be cost effective, but in the short term, there was the expense of having these new envelopes printed up. Each department had to pay for and arrange to have its own penalty franks printed, and each department made the conversion at its own pace. All departments took the frugal approach of using up their existing stock of envelopes that had been redesigned for use with official stamps (comer card moved to the upper left, so the stamp could be affixed in the traditional upper right), just as they had four years earlier in 1873, when they continued to use up their existing supply of obsolete free frank envelopes.³

In using up these envelopes, the effort required to attach an official stamp, paste on a penalty sticker, stamp on a penalty clause by hand, or have the envelope sent back back to

¹John N. Luff, *Postage Stamps of the United States*, rev. ed. (Lawrence, Mass.: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1981), p. 216.

²Warren S. Howard, "What Have We Done? Congress Probes the Departmentals, 1873-1884," *Chronicle*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Whole No. 183)(August 1999), pp. 209-17.

³Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

the printer to have a penalty clause added, were all equivalent, and all four methods were utilized. When the use of penalty envelopes was expanded to include field offices in March 1879, the POD's circular to postmasters was quite explicit on these measures of economy: post office envelopes were to be used with official stamps until the supply of either the stamps or envelopes were exhausted. Presumably, the same logic had prevailed in the mailrooms at the great departmental headquarters in Washington, D.C. in 1877.

As we have seen, the requisitions for official postage in 1877 were no lower than they had been the previous year, suggesting that the orders had not been scaled down in anticipation of the pending legislation authorizing the use of penalty envelopes. As a result, all departments would have had an ample supply of official stamps on hand. Because most departments had field offices that would still require stamps on their mail prior to 1879, the official stamps rendered surplus by the introduction of penalty envelopes in Washington, D.C. could easily be disbursed as needed to the field offices. Of course, all the departmental mailrooms in Washington, D.C. still needed to retain some official stamps to pay foreign postage or the registry fee, or to be used on the remaining stock of envelopes.

In analyzing how official stamps were used in Washington, D.C. during the transitional period, we need to consider four basic sources: covers franked with official stamps, classic penalty franks, off-cover official stamps identifiable as having been used in Washington, D.C. during this period based on their distinctive cancellations, and the annual record of official postage stamps requisitioned by each of the departments. Our efforts to get a true and comprehensive understanding of official mail has always been hampered by the lack of available covers. Those sent to private individuals often did not warrant being saved due to the unsentimental nature of their contents, and those sent to government officials, which might be docketed and filed with their enclosures for a while, were ultimately destroyed when the archives were purged.

Classic penalty covers are of course relevant, because in theory that they can prove how early and extensively each department converted over. Sadly, classic penalty franks have suffered even worse attrition than official covers, because in the absence of stamps they were passed over and discarded by the first generation of cover collectors. What has survived is not necessarily representative and can easily be misinterpreted. For example, anyone who has ever tried collecting them knows that classic penalty franks from the Executive Office or the Navy, Justice, State and Agriculture departments are scarce. It would be easy to conclude that these departments, perhaps due their much smaller volume of mail, had taken a desultory approach to converting over. But Warren Howard, extrapolating from the official stamp requisitions of prior years, calculated that their cumulative total would have represented only 1.5% of all official mail.⁴ In short, just because they haven't survived doesn't mean that they didn't once exist.

Conversely, off-cover used official stamps have survived in far greater quantities, and by default in this case are of critical importance in writing postal history. But making allowances for the different survival rates of official covers, classic penalty franks and used official stamps, it is possible to make convincing arguments even on the basis of what doesn't exist. To cite one example, if no Justice official stamps canceled with the characteristic Washington, D.C. numeral obliterations of 1880-1884 have ever been seen, this is compelling evidence that this department was using penalty envelopes exclusively during this period.

For collectors of official stamps, the tables of annual requisitions by each department printed in Luff have always been the Rosetta Stone, a block of statistics capable of unlocking mysteries but in certain aspects undecipherable and inscrutable. Ah, yes, one thinks,

⁴Warren S. Howard, "The Classic Penalty Franks," *Chronicle*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Whole No. 179)(August 1998), p. 214.

seeing the requisitions by the Treasury Department for only 10¢ stamps in 1880 and 1884: these were needed to pay the registry fee on penalty envelopes. But what then to make of Agriculture, after not ordering any 10¢-30¢ stamps for six years (1876-1881), suddenly out of the blue ordering 50, 65, or 150 of each over the next three years? Could these have been ordered to make up complete sets for the stamp-gatherers who so persistently importuned that some departments had special response forms printed up? For the focus of this article, the use of official stamps in Washington, D.C. from 1877 to 1884, these statistics are of limited use, since they lump together stamps for use in the capital and those to be dispersed to the field offices.

In the four omnibus collections of official stamps being exhibited (Rollin C. Huggins, Jr.; Lester C. Lanphear, III; Robert L. Markovits; and my own), there are 262 official covers from Washington, D.C. of which 187 or 71% come from the 1873-1877 period, while 75 or 29% come from the 1878-1884 period (1878: 23; 1879: 14; 1880: 7; 1881: 10; 1882: 10; 1883: 4; 1884: 7). In the years 1877-1878, remaining stocks of official stamps were still being used up on the older style of envelopes. From 1879 on, official stamps were primarily used on foreign or registered mail, or as forwarding postage on incoming diplomatic pouch mail from overseas consulates. A few covers are from smaller agencies that appear to have been overlooked during the conversion process. There are also some anomalies, covers that by all rights should have been penalty franks. For information on the classic penalty franks, I was fortunate to be able to consult the definitive exhibit collection of my assistant editor, Lester C. Lanphear, III. As for off-cover official stamps with Washington, D.C. cancellations, I relied on my own collection, recently reorganized as a marcophilately study, with 38 over-sized pages devoted to a chronological study of Washington, D.C. cancelling practices, 1873-1884. It was the shock of realizing that after twenty years of collecting, I had no examples of the D.C. numeral cancellations of 1880-1884 on either Agriculture or Justice stamps, which first stimulated me to open this inquiry. The results of this research and analysis will be presented department by department in the order of their importance, with examples of both typical and exceptional usages illustrated.

The Executive Mansion

President Rutherford B. Hayes' inauguration on March 3, 1877 coincided with the authorized use of penalty franks. After the fiscal year 1877, no further stamps were ordered. Penalty envelopes were printed up, with an "Official Business" designation added under the "Executive Mansion" corner card. Based on surviving covers, penalty handstamps were apparently never utilized. President Hayes, his family and staff used up the remaining supply of official stamps on personal correspondence sent out in the older style of envelopes. A fair number of the original letters survive to confirm this use. Also, a few of these older style envelopes were posted in 1878 with regular Banknote adhesives: these are believed to have contained invitations. The violet cancellations of 1878 can be found on most values, but the indigo cancellations of 1879-1880 are rare. In Figure 1, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate the latest reported usage of Executive stamps, a triple domestic rate cover posted January 19, 1880, from the President's secretary, W.K. Rogers, to Columbus, Ohio. While no one could begrudge the President using official stamps on his private mail, the concept of his secretary sticking three of the last Executive stamps on a plain white envelope addressed to his wife seems almost sacrilegious! Of the later numeral cancelers, only a few strikes of the three ring target have been reported. Penalty envelopes from the Hayes and the brief Garfield administrations are extremely scarce, with less than ten recorded. President Arthur discontinued the use of the undignified penalty clause on official business mail from the Executive Mansion, and it did not reappear until the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. For the transitional period, 1877-1884, no examples of foreign or registered Executive Mansion mail requiring supplemental postage have ever been seen.

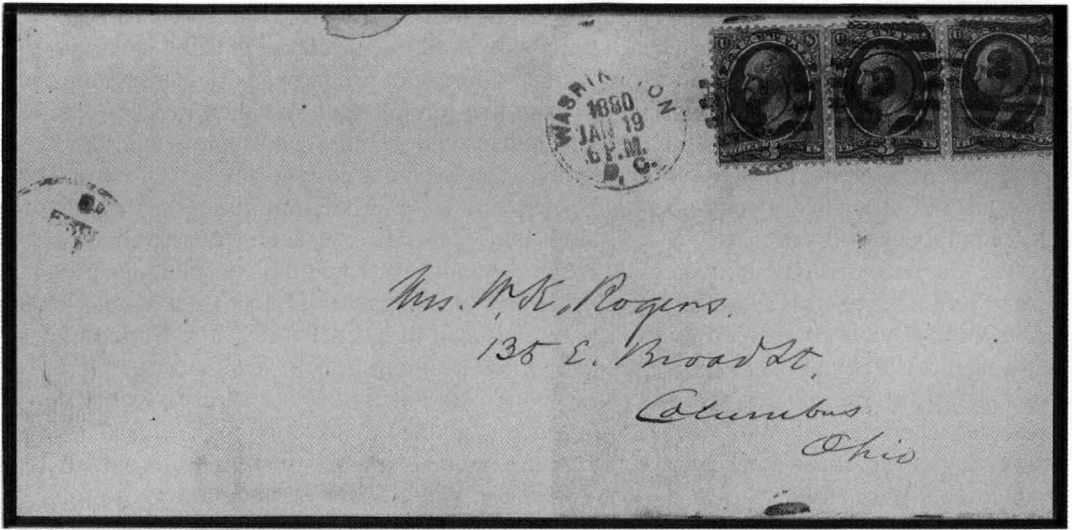


Figure 1. Triple domestic rate illegitimate private usage of Executive stamps, 1880, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits. This is the only reported on-cover use of indigo canceling ink on Executive stamps, and the largest reported used multiple of the 3¢ stamp.

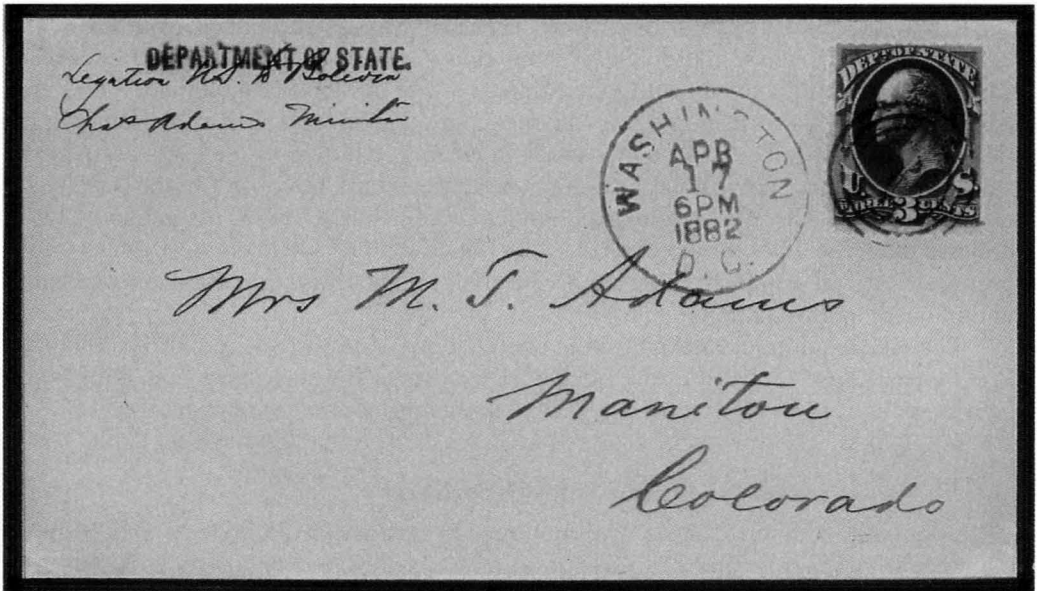


Figure 2. Diplomatic pouch mail from the U.S. Legation to Bolivia, 1882.

Department of State

No official stamps were requisitioned for the fiscal years 1878-1880, as there were adequate supplies in stock from the heavy 1877 order. From 1881 to 1884, mostly higher values (10¢-\$2) were ordered, presumably to be used on packages and foreign mail. For domestic official business mail, handstamps were used to convert the existing stock of envelopes to penalty use. No example of a State cover with printed penalty clause from the transitional period has been reported yet. Outgoing foreign mail, of which very few examples have survived, seems also to have been sent with penalty handstamps, with the dispatch agent in New York adding the required supplemental postage per U.P.U. rates. The famous \$2 State parcel front to Stuttgart, Germany is the prime example of this use, but a large number of off-cover used State stamps buttresses this explanation. Most values up to the \$2 can be found with the numerals 1-6 in vertically barred ellipse cancellations used in New York on first class foreign mail from 1877-1886, and also with the dated double ovals thought to have been used on third class foreign mail from 1879-1887. The United States Government Despatch Agency at the Post Office Building in New York stocked the official stamps of various departments (State, Navy and Post Office for sure) to rectify deficiencies when the original sender had forgotten to add the proper foreign postage. The few surviving covers illustrating this type of use are fascinating and deserve a dedicated article, which could hopefully resolve a vexing mystery: why, if official stamps were no longer valid on U.P.U. mail after April 1, 1879, did the dispatch agent in New York consistently flaunt this change in regulations?

No examples of Department of State registered mail have been reported, but off-cover used stamps with double oval registry cancels from New York and Washington, D.C. have both been seen.

The vast majority of State covers from the transitional period with supplemental postage consists of diplomatic pouch mail. Private incoming mail from consulates overseas was brought in locked pouches to the State mailroom in Washington, D.C., where official stamps were added to pay domestic postage rates before the letters were put into the Post Office mailstream. In Figure 2, we show a typical example, from Charles Adams, the Minister of the U.S. Legation to Bolivia, carried in diplomatic pouch from La Paz to Washington, D.C., where the 3¢ State stamp and the "Department of State" blue-black handstamp were added to carry it to the Minister's wife in Manitou, Colorado. A few covers survive from this correspondence without stamps, but with a penalty handstamp in the State mailroom. These were probably struck in error, as this type of mail was deemed private correspondence, not official business, and hence would be subject to the penalty for private use, \$300. The Washington, D.C. violet cancellations of 1878, the indigo of 1879-1880 and the three types of numerals of 1880-1884 can all be found on most values of off-cover State official stamps through the \$2. Presumably, most of these originated on incoming diplomatic pouch mail.

The undated third class double-oval cancellations of 1880-1884 can also be found on most values. These probably came off parcel wrappings for domestic mailings of books and documents, but it is unclear why penalty handstamps weren't used instead.

Treasury Department

Requisitions of official stamps continued at normal levels in 1878 and 1879, as postage was needed for the extensive field office correspondence from U.S. Assessor Offices and Collectors of Internal Revenue. But after penalty envelopes were authorized for field office use in 1879, only 10¢ Treasury stamps were requisitioned in 1880 and 1884 in order to pay the supplemental registry fee. The Treasury Department sent a large amount of registered mail, and a number of examples have survived. This department also scrupulously complied with the change in U.P.U. regulations in 1879, and began stocking

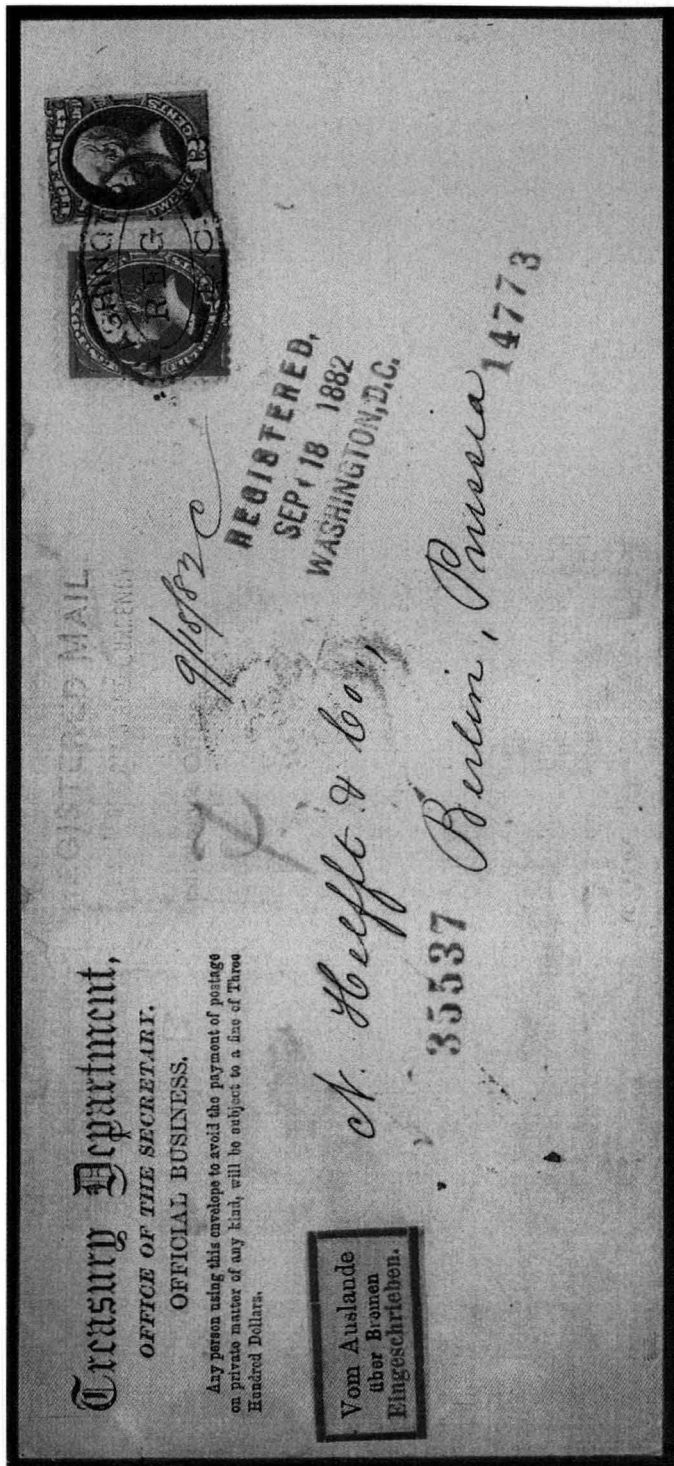


Figure 3. Registered mixed franking to Berlin, Germany, 1882, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits. 15¢ triple U.P.U. rate paid by 15¢ Banknote stamp, 10¢ registry fee overpaid by 12¢ Treasury stamp.

regular Banknote issues for use on foreign mail. In Figure 3, we illustrate a famous penalty cover to Berlin, Prussia, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, in which the 10¢ registry fee is overpaid with a 12¢ official stamp, and the triple rate foreign postage is paid with a 15¢ Banknote.

Treasury Department classic penalty franks are fairly common. Conversely, it is almost impossible to find a Treasury cover from the transitional period franked with official stamps to pay domestic postage. Moreover, it is difficult to find any of the distinctive Washington, D.C. cancellations from 1878-1884 struck on Treasury stamps. On this basis, it is safe to say that the Treasury Department converted over to using penalty envelopes as quickly as possible, and may not have even practiced the economy of using up their older style of envelopes first.

Also, soon after the use of penalty franks was extended to field offices in 1879, the Treasury Department had them printed up by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in a standardized format. Given this department's otherwise scrupulous compliance with postal regulations, it seems odd that these field office penalty envelopes never included the standard proviso "This envelope, without postage stamps, can only be used for correspondence with the Executive Departments and officers of the United States." Treasury stamps seem never to have been disbursed to the field offices for this purpose, and no covers addressed to private citizens exist, showing scrupulous compliance with this limitation.

War Department

Requisitions of official postage stamps actually went up after 1877, and stayed heavy for all values through 1884. This department's use of official stamps was heavily weighted towards remote field office use, and no concerted, organized effort was put into converting over to the use of penalty envelopes. The absence of a uniform policy extended even to Washington, D.C., where for example the Office of the Chief of Engineers and the Ordnance Department eventually got their acts together and started using penalty envelopes, while other agencies lagged behind.

All the distinctive Washington, D.C. cancellations of 1878-1884 can be found on War Department stamps. A few penalty envelopes from the transitional period have survived with a 10¢ War stamp added to pay the registry fee. War Department foreign mail covers are quite scarce. In Figure 4, we illustrate a beautiful small 1882 cover with a blue Office of the Chief Signal Officer corner card to Vienna, Austria, with a 6¢ War stamp overpaying the 5¢ U.P.U. rate. Once again, the prohibition against using official stamps on foreign mail has been overlooked. Apparently, foreign post offices did not consider this a serious violation, as no cover has survived in which the official stamps were not acknowledged and postage due charged. After July 1884, penalty stickers and handstamps were used to demonetize official stamped envelopes at such places as Bismark, Dakota Territory and Prescott, Arizona Territory.

Navy Department

After 1877, mostly lower values (1¢-6¢) were requisitioned. These stamps would have been for use chiefly at naval bases along the Eastern seaboard, and also in the nation's capital. As with the War Department, there seems to have been a large stock of the older style of envelopes to use up, and no uniform policy about having penalty envelopes printed. This department sent little registered or foreign mail, so it is not surprising that no penalty envelopes from the transitional period have survived with supplemental official postage to pay either of these rates. Yet all of the distinctive Washington, D.C. cancellations of 1878-1884 can be found on these stamps, including the third class undated oval postmark/obliterators. Surviving covers from Washington, D.C. during the transitional period include Office of the Admiral (1879), Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting (1880), and to Robert Peary at the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (1881). Of exceptional interest



Figure 4. 5¢ U.P.U. rate overpaid by 6¢ War to Vienna, Austria, 1882.

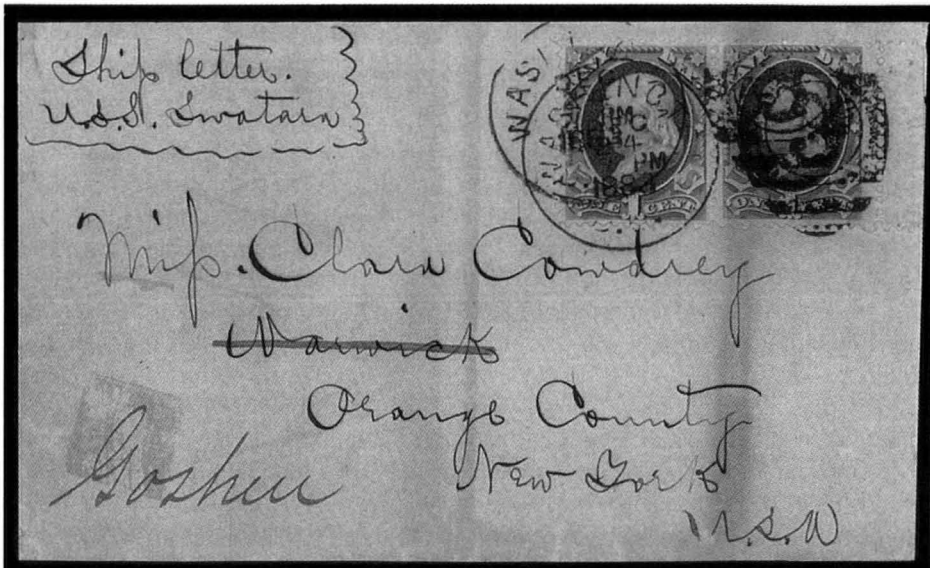


Figure 5. 2¢ domestic rate from the U.S.S. Swatara, carried outside the mails to Washington, D.C., 1883, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear, III. Two recorded pairs of the 1¢ Navy on cover.

and worthy of their own separate article are private letters addressed to Navy personnel at sea, where forwarded foreign postage was added in the Navy Department mailroom. From the transitional period, there survive three such covers to Brazil from 1877 and 1878. In Figure 5, courtesy of Lester C. Lanphear; III, we illustrate an 1883 ship letter from the U.S.S. *Swatara* carried outside the mails to Washington, D.C., where the correct 2¢ domestic rate postage was added.

Department of the Interior

Requisitions of official stamps fell off after 1877, but remained steady for all values through 1884. Most of this would have been for the use of Land Offices, Pension Offices and Indian Agents across the country, because the Attorney General's opinion of 1879 (that penalty franks were not valid for field office & correspondence with private citizens) had been in direct response to the Secretary of the Interior's request for clarification. Still, all of the distinctive cancellations used in Washington, D.C. from 1878 through 1884 can be found on used off-cover Interior stamps. Examples of surviving old style covers with official stamps from the transitional period include the Smithsonian Institution (1878, 1879) and the U.S. Geologic and Geographic Survey of the Territories (1879). The larger agencies—Patent Office, Office of the Secretary, Pension Office, General Land Office—all converted over quickly to the use of penalty envelopes. Although this department did generate a fair amount of foreign mail, there are no recorded examples of penalty envelopes with supplemental foreign postage. In Figure 6, we illustrate a Patent Office penalty envelope from 1884 with a supplemental 10¢ Interior stamp (American printing) to pay the registry fee. Several similar usages have survived. There also exists an unusual Census Office penalty envelope from 1881 with a 3¢ Interior stamp affixed over the penalty clause and the handstamped corner card of Ernest Ingersoll, U.S. Census Expert. In a ludicrous example of hair-splitting, Mr. Ingersoll, as a private individual representing the Census Office, had been furnished penalty envelopes, but was apparently not entitled to use them without first attaching one of the official stamps that had also been provided!

Department of Justice

No official stamps were requisitioned after 1879, except for 1,000 each of the 2¢ and 3¢ values in 1884. This last order may have been for disbursal to U.S. Attorney offices across the country, in belated acknowledgment that their correspondence with private individuals required supplemental postage, although no such covers have survived. Very little, if any, foreign or registered mail was sent by the Department of Justice, as no covers of either type or off-cover stamps appropriately canceled have ever been reported. The Washington, D.C. violet cancellations of 1878 exist in fair quantity on Justice stamps both on and off cover, but the indigo cancellations of 1879-1880 are scarce off-cover, and only two covers, both with the 3¢ soft paper adhesive, have been recorded, both from the Solicitor of the U.S. Treasury. This office had always purchased its stamps from the Department of Justice, and apparently did not take the initiative to have its own penalty envelopes printed. In Figure 7, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate another cover from the Solicitor of the Treasury, with 1¢ and 2¢ Justice stamps making up the 3¢ domestic rate, posted in 1880 and canceled with numeral 1 in three ring target. Not even in Theodore Lockyear's majestic collection, devoted solely to the Department of Justice, is there another example of these stamps, on or off cover, with any of the Washington, D.C. numeral cancellations. Although Justice penalty envelopes from the transitional period are not common, they do exist, and the complete absence of off-cover cancellations from the 1880-1884 interval suggests that as soon as the existing stock of old style envelopes was used up, the Department of Justice converted over to the exclusive use of penalty envelopes.

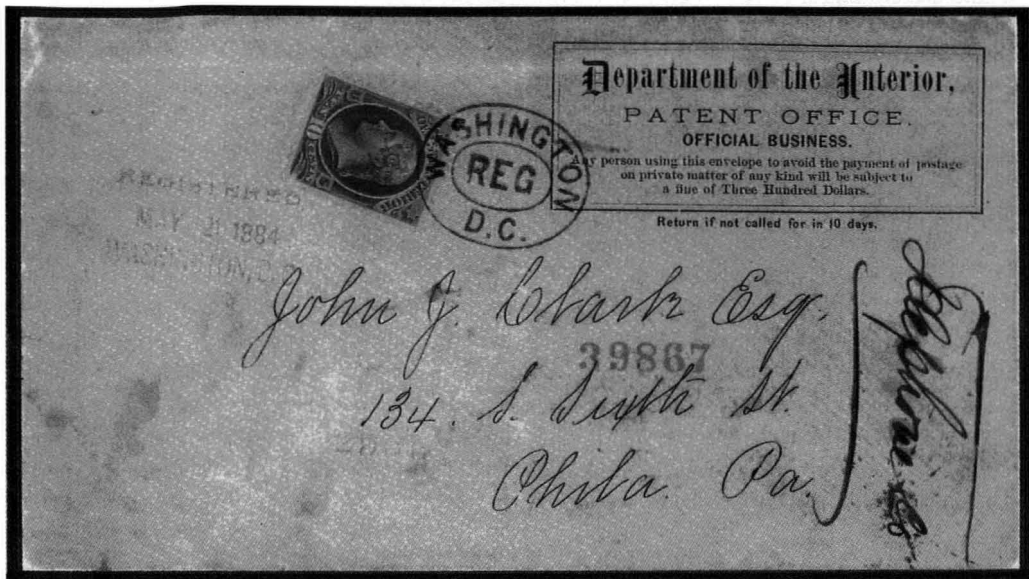


Figure 6. Registered domestic penalty envelope, 1884, with the registry fee paid by a 10¢ soft paper American printing.

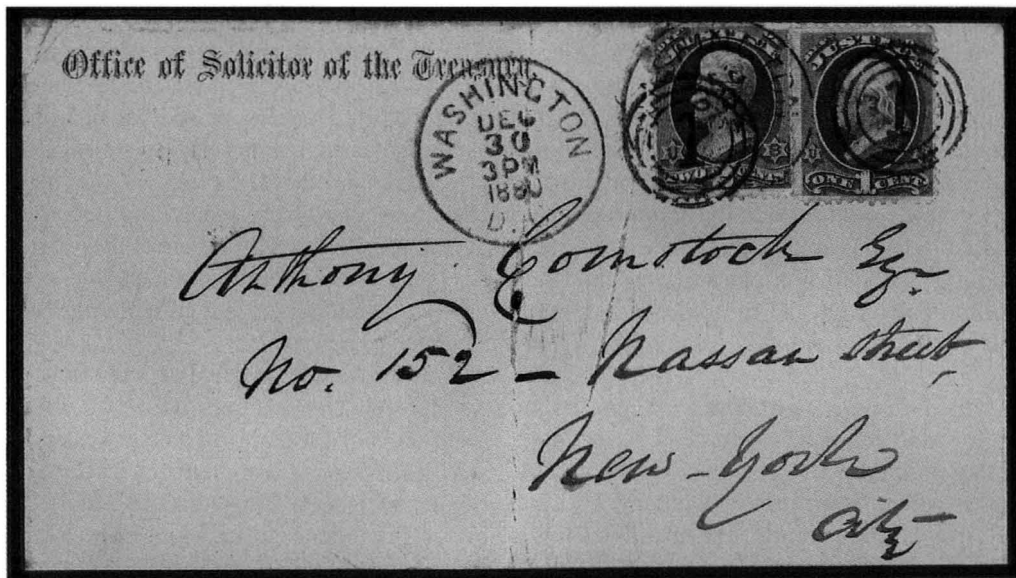


Figure 7. 3¢ domestic rate from the Office of Solicitor of the Treasury, 1880, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits. The only reported combined usage of the 1¢ and 2¢ Justice stamps, and the latest reported usage of Justice stamps.

Department of Agriculture

After 1877, mostly 3¢ stamps were requisitioned, 40,000-60,000 a year through 1883. These were mostly needed for use on prestamped reply envelopes, sent out to farmers across the land soliciting their seed orders and crop reports. The use of reply penalty envelopes was not authorized until 1884. This department sent virtually no foreign mail, and the only cover recorded—a beautiful penalty cover to Canada posted in 1878 with a 3¢ Agriculture stamp—was stolen with the Starnes collection in 1983 and is believed lost to philately. Also, no examples of registered Agriculture mail have ever been reported. The Washington, D.C. violet cancellations of 1878 are not common on Agriculture stamps, the indigo cancellations of 1879-1880 are extremely rare, and no off-cover examples of the 1880-1884 numerals have been reported. In Figure 8, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits, we illustrate a beautiful small cover with the Commissioner's Office corner card printed in blue, posted in 1882 and canceled with a fishtail numeral "1" in ellipse. This is the only recorded in-period use of the 3¢ Agriculture stamp on soft paper. Although Agriculture classic penalty franks are not common, they do exist used much earlier than 1882. Apparently the Commissioner's Office still had some of the old style envelopes left over. Despite this notable exception, the Department of Agriculture can be said to have converted quickly to the use of penalty envelopes.

Post Office Department

No official stamps were requisitioned after the fiscal year 1879, reflecting the expanded use of penalty envelopes outside of Washington, D.C. Once again, supplemental postage in theory ought to have been required on postmaster mail to private citizens, but only the Department of the Interior scrupulously complied with the Attorney General's ruling of 1879. On off-cover used Post Office stamps, the distinctive Washington, D.C. cancellations of 1878-1884 are found in chronologically diminishing quantities, consistent with the remaining stocks of official stamps having been used up on old style envelopes before penalty envelopes were put into service.

The Post Office had all along been entitled to free registry of its own official business mail, so we do not find, nor would expect to find, penalty envelopes with the supplemental registry fee paid with stamps. An exception to this would be Postal Service penalty envelopes from the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Division of Stamps, Stamped Envelopes and Postal Cards containing fulfilled orders of special printings. Provided the collector or dealer had paid for it, regular issue stamps paying postage and the registry fee were added, in thoughtful acknowledgement that the recipient was a collector and would especially appreciate them. That the stamps were essentially decorative and superfluous is proven by the existence of registered Postal Service envelopes carried through the mail without supplemental postage, because the recipient—usually a savvy stamp-dealer who had figured out that the Post Office would never jeopardize a philatelic sale for the want of a few cents postage—had neglected to pay for it.⁵

In Figure 7, courtesy of Alfred E. Staubus, we illustrate a spectacular 1876 cover to Berlin, Germany, with the postage and registry fee paid by a combination of official stamps and regular issues. This cover is addressed to Paul Lietzow—a stamp dealer and heavy purchaser of special printings—who would later order a complete set of the State dollar value "Specimens" (sold by a German dealer to Robert Lewenthal in 1953). Mr. Lietzow had apparently miscalculated the weight of his order, and had sent only 30¢ for postage: 10¢ for the registry fee and 20¢ for the quadruple U.P.U. rate. To make up the additional 5¢ for quintuple weight, the Post Office added two 3¢ official stamps for a 1¢

⁵For a thorough treatment of such covers, see Alfred E. Staubus, "Covers Used to Mail Shipments of the Special Printing," *Chronicle*, Volume 42, No. 4 (Whole No. 148)(November 1990), pp. 254-66.

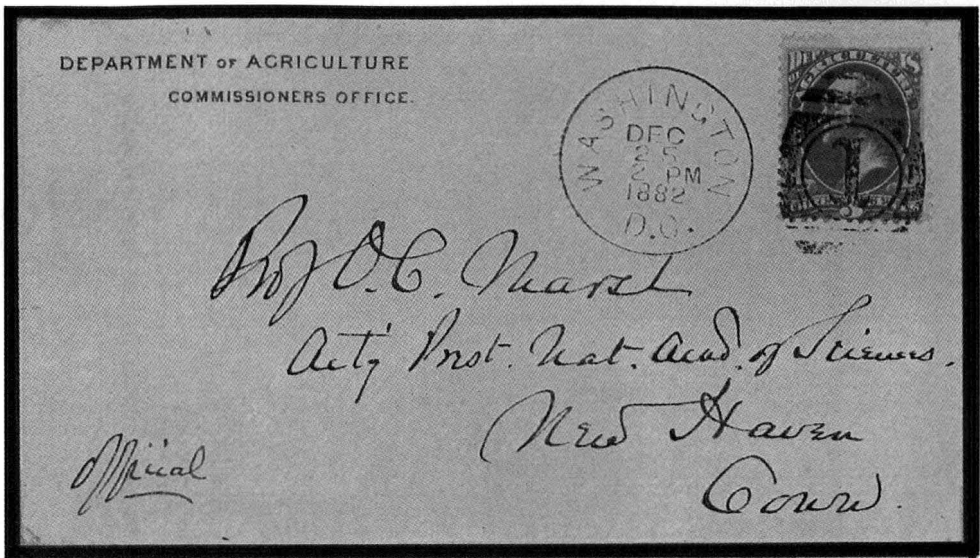


Figure 8. 3¢ domestic rate from the Commissioner’s Office, 1882, courtesy of Robert L. Markovits. The latest reported usage of an Agriculture stamp, and the only recorded in-period usage of the American printing on soft paper.

overpayment. A receipt for a similar domestic mailing in 1876, kindly furnished by Mr. Staubus, bears the notation “Balance of registry paid by Dep’t with off l stamps.” Whereas many official mixed frankings elude straightforward analysis, this one—with Washington, D.C. and New York registry markings and a German registry label—does not, and affords the specialist today a *frisson* of pleasure, to see extraordinary postal history created inadvertently where, in the case of a letter to, a stamp dealer, one’s first instinct might be to suspect a philatelic contrivance. During the transitional period, the penalty clause was accepted by foreign governments for official business mail between postal entities, but correct foreign postage was required for correspondence with private citizens. A cover such as the one above would typically be franked with 5¢ Taylor stamps.⁶

Post Office covers franked with official stamps during the transitional period are not common. Several examples survive of legal-size mourning covers mailed out on March 26, 1883, addressed to postmasters and containing an announcement that Postmaster General Howes had died the day before. Presumably there was no lead time to have special mourning penalty envelopes printed up, so commercial envelopes were bought at a stationer and franked with 3¢ Post Office stamps. There also exists a cover from the Office of Second Assistant P.M. General, franked with a 15¢ stamp and posted in 1880.

Independent government agencies, such as the Smithsonian Institution and Fish and Fisheries, which formerly had been forced to purchase official stamps from the Interior and Treasury departments, converted quickly to using penalty envelopes, since eliminating the cost of postage would obviously help balance their budgets. During the transitional period, penalty covers are also known from the National Board of Health and the Library of Congress, two agencies which had not previously used official stamps.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 264-66.



Figure 9. Registered mixed franking to Berlin, Germany, 1876, courtesy of Alfred E. Staubus. 25¢ quintuple U.P.U. postage and 10¢ registry fee overpaid 1¢ by a combination of Banknote and official stamps. This and the Treasury cover (Figure 3) constitute the only recorded registered mixed franking official covers to foreign destinations.

Conclusion

During the transitional period from 1877 to 1884, all the departments converted to using penalty envelopes in Washington, D.C. For most departments, the supply of older style envelopes and their stock of official stamps were virtually exhausted by 1879. For a few agencies of the War Department, the Navy Department, and the Department of the Interior that generated relatively little official mail, the supply of older style envelopes lasted longer and occasioned some late use of official stamps on domestic mail. The scarcity of classic penalty franks from the Executive Mansion and the State, Navy, Justice and Agriculture departments is due to the comparatively small volume of mail generated and to the sad fact that most of these being stampless were not considered collectible and were destroyed years ago. Actually, it can be argued that classic penalty franks with supplemental postage have survived in disproportionate numbers to those without stamps, further clouding the picture.

It is hoped that this sort of overview will stimulate articles on other aspects of official postal history, such as: use of official stamps by the Government Despatch Agency in New York; official mixed frankings; use of Navy stamps in Washington, D.C. to forward mail abroad; a listing of consulates whose incoming diplomatic pouch mail was forwarded by the Department of State; a listing of the earliest recorded classic penalty franks from each department and agency; and an analysis of how each department handled its field office correspondence with private citizens during the transitional period. Without the unprecedented level of cooperation and sharing that now exists among specialists in this field, tackling any of these topics would be an impossible task, in light of how little material is left to analyze. Those of us who doubt that the official covers stolen from the Starnes collection in 1983 will ever be recovered would like to see photocopies of them finally disseminated, since these would be of immeasurable help in our research. □

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EDITOR'S NOTE: OFFICIALS AT 1999 STAMPSHOW
ALAN C. CAMPBELL

"IT'S OFFICIAL!," screamed the headlines, according to 1997 Champion of Champions Richard Drews. Back in November 1994, reporting on the C of C competition at APS Stampshow in Pittsburgh, I described this as "an historic occasion, since not one but two great exhibits surveying this neglected field were on display."¹ This past August in Cleveland, Robert L. Markovits and Lester C. Lanphear, III were joined in the championship class by Theodore Lockyear of Evansville, Indiana, who had qualified by winning the grand award at Indypex 1998 with his peerless showing of the Department of Justice. The legendary Goff correspondence cover, franked with four 30¢ and three 90¢ Justice stamps, would be on public display for the first time. Looking for an excuse to attend, I brazenly entered my own marcophilately collection in the open competition.

Once there, we privately despaired that the surfeit of official stamps on display would work against us, making the material in general look "common" and exposing the holes in each other's collections. With Dr. David C. Lobdell, a long-time specialist in the War Department, and Dr. Dennis Schmidt, a specialist in official stamped envelopes, also in sympathetic attendance, we regarded ourselves as a mutual admiration society. After all, in the intervening years since Pittsburgh, Mr. Markovits had added many important pieces to his showing—most notably the unique \$5 State irregular block of six and the matching proof invert strips²—and still was discouraged to receive only a small gold at Paris this summer, judged at 90 points on a par with an exhibit of Egyptian official stamps. Mr. Lanphear had also improved his exhibit, most notably with a 3¢ Executive cover to Rome with Italian postage due stamps.

Anyway, after gobbling up my mousse at the awards banquet and checking around to see if anyone at our table might be allergic to chocolate, I was caught off-guard when it was announced that my own exhibit had won the grand award in the open competition. And Mr. Markovits was even more astonished at the final drum roll, when he was asked to step forward and receive the trophy as Champion of Champions. It is safe to say, we are to a man deeply grateful that the judges have seen fit to recognize our specialty. We have no illusions about popularizing again the collecting of official stamps, which were once all the rage among schoolboy stamp-gatherers—not after Mr. Markovits' scheduled walking tour of the four exhibits drew only ourselves and the dedicated specialist dealer Albert Chang. But at least we can no longer complain that our field fails to get the respect it deserves. In his remarks, Mr. Markovits paid homage to Rollin C. Huggins, Jr., whose, pioneering articles in *Official Chatter* helped us first think in a systematic, analytical way about what we were collecting. Mr. Markovits himself had arranged for many of us to come speak at the Collectors Club of New York over the years, in an ongoing forum on U.S. official stamps. Since Alfred E. Staubus initiated this section of the *Chronicle* back in 1990, virtually every research article has been dependent on shared material and the pooling of knowledge. Uncertain as to whether this sort of congeniality is typical of most philatelic specialities, I am nevertheless thankful to be able to count all the gentlemen mentioned above as my friends. □

¹Alan C. Campbell, "Two Tickets to Pittsburgh," *Chronicle*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Whole No. 164) (November 1994), pp. 269-74.

²In my 1994 review, I had mercilessly put these at the head of my list of key items conspicuously missing: *ibid*, p. 273.

Section Editor's Note: The following paper may seem a bit unusual for the Foreign Mails section of the *Chronicle*, where I try to emphasize United States mails to overseas countries during the classic period. There is, however, an important transatlantic mail connection.

Jeff Bohn prepared this paper for a recent meeting of the International Postal History Fellowship (IPHF) in Rheinbach, Germany. The IPHF is a small group of international postal historians that meet once each year to share original research in an intense, three-day seminar. The contents of these studies are often expanded through the discussions at these meetings. Later, some of the studies are published in various journals available to collectors and postal historians. Jeff's paper introduced a number of very unusual markings, ones not often seen. Jeff is the first to document the source of these markings and to establish their reason for existing. Although the rate markings resulted from a postal convention between two European states, they were often used on mails that were not exchanged between the two states. Additionally, a few of the markings have been recorded on transatlantic mails between the United States, France, and the Papal States. None of these markings is common. My purpose in bringing this information to the readers of the *Chronicle* is a desire to uncover more examples, which may reside in their collections unrecognized. Perhaps this information will aid the research already in progress. Jeff has been a long-time assistant with the Foreign Mails section. He seldom prepares an article for this journal because his study interests are often outside the area of United States postal history. I am pleased that this study has a small transatlantic connection so I can bring his work to the attention of our readers.

-Richard F. Winter

**"BAJOCCHI" POSTAGE DUE HANDSTAMPS UNDER
THE 1853 FRANCO-ROMAN CONVENTION**
JEFFREY C. BOHN

Introduction

The penultimate Postal Convention between France and the Roman States went into effect on 1 October 1853. Under this Convention, provisions were made for the exchange of letters between the two countries, and France was issued a set of postage due handstamps for use on unpaid letters forwarded to the Roman States.¹ These postage due handstamps were prepared by the Roman States Post, then sent to France for use at the Paris Foreign Office (*Bureau Etranger*) and at various French exchange offices.² The markings themselves have a very distinctive form, and exist for both the single and double weight rates (expressed in bajocchi currency) found on the original Letter Bills.

The fact that these postage due handstamps were applied by the French Post is indisputable, for the majority of known uses of these markings are found on French-related mails that never involved the Roman States Post. This article will attempt to describe the various categories and postage due rates defined on the original Letter Bill, and show examples of the bajocchi handstamps that have been recorded to date. Unfortunately, little official documentation is available on this subject, so that many of the observations presented here are based solely on postal history evidence.

¹Clive Parry, LL.D, ed., *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, 231 vols. (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1969), vol. 110, pp. 11-25, "Convention de poste conclue á Rome le 1^{er} avril 1853, entre la France et le Saint-Siége."

²Clemente Fedele and Mario Gallenga, *Per servizio di Nostro Signore – Strade, corrieri e poste dei papi dal Medioevo al 1870* (Prato, Italy: Istituto de Storici Postali, 1988), pp. 423-33.

TABLE 1

LETTER BILL ARTICLES FROM THE FRANCO-ROMAN CONVENTION
1 OCTOBER 1853

ARTICLE	ORIGIN	AMOUNT DUE	(Single)	(Double)
26	France and Algeria	20 baj per 7½ gr	90	h0
27	French Offices in the Mediterranean	20 baj per 7½ gr		
28	Switzerland Luxembourg Baden Bavaria Rhenish Prussia Principality of Hesse	18 baj per 7½ gr	18	36
29	Remaining German States Belgium Netherlands Spain Portugal Gibraltar Overseas Countries via Commercial Vessels	22 baj per 7½ gr	99	hh
30	Great Britain India China Other East Indies Origins	26 baj per 7½ gr	96	59
31	Australia (via Suez) Undesignated Overseas Countries (via GB)	38 baj per 7½ gr	38	"76"
32	Canada Newfoundland Jamaica	42 baj per 7½ gr	h2	8h(?)
33	All Pacific Coast Origins (via Panama)	50 baj per 7½ gr	50	100
			(?)	(?)

Letter Bill Articles

A summary of the Letter Bill Articles from the 1853 Franco-Roman Convention is shown in Table 1. The various letter origins associated with each Article number are presented in the Table, along with the applicable postage due rates. In addition, the postage due handstamps, expressed in bajocchi currency, are shown when known. Those markings accompanied by the (?) symbol have yet to be recorded, but have been synthesized from portions of known handstamps.

Article 26

Article 26 of the Letter Bill established the exchange rates associated with unpaid letters sent from France and Algeria to the Roman States. The total postage due on these letters was 20 bajocchi (100 centimes) per 7½ grams. Of this amount, France received a fee of 45 centimes per 7½ grams for its portion of the transit services provided, and the Roman States retained 20 centimes for its internal postage. A sea transit fee of 35 centimes per 7½ grams was credited to the country that provided the maritime transit from France to the Roman States. France applied a 20 bajocchi postage due handstamp to unpaid, single weight letters exchanged under this Article (Figure 1), and a 40 bajocchi handstamp to double weight letters (Figure 2). To date, these are the most common bajocchi handstamps found under this Convention.

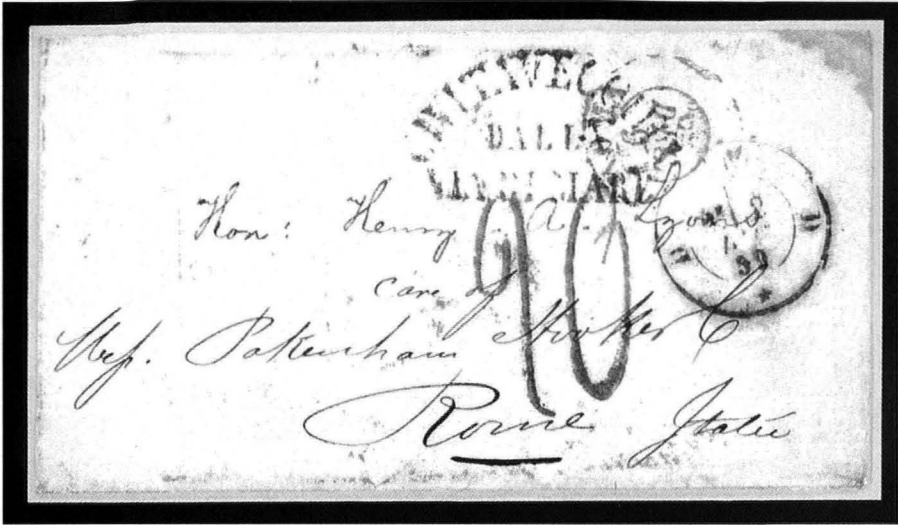


Figure 1. November 1859, letter from Paris, France sent unpaid to Rome via the French Ligne d'Italie paquebot *Phillipe-Auguste*. France applied the 20 bajocchi postage due marking to indicate the total amount due on delivery.



Figure 2. December 1853, double weight letter from Montmorency, France sent unpaid to the Roman States, and showing the 40 bajocchi postage due handstamp applied by the Paris Foreign Office.

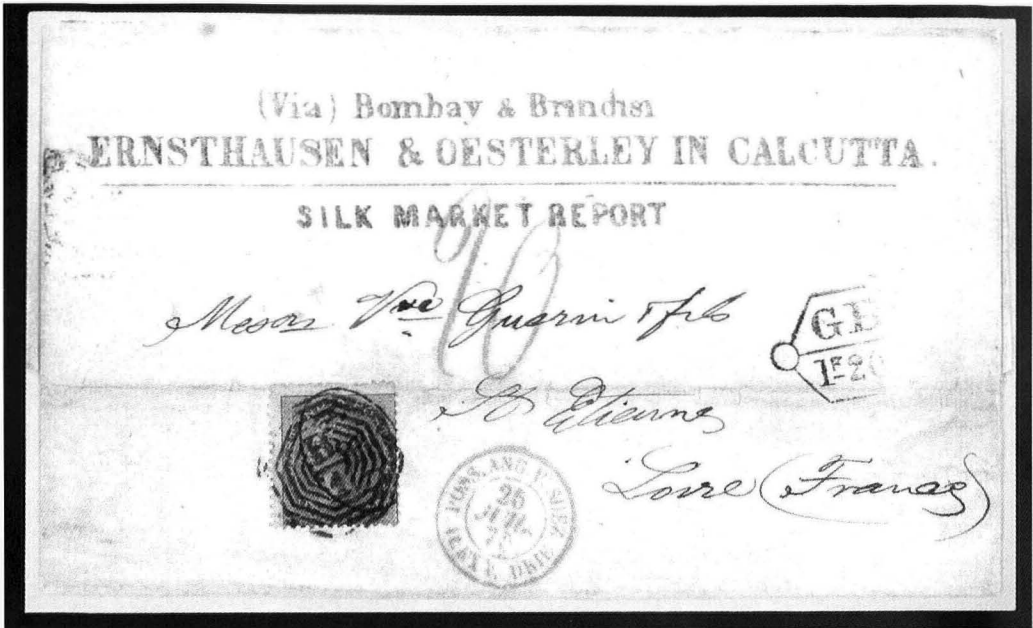


Figure 3. July 1875, locally paid printed circular from Calcutta, India sent to Suez aboard the P&O Line *Zambesi*, then transferred to the French Ligne de Syrie *Niemen* for the transit from Alexandria to Marseille. On arrival, France applied the 20 bajocchi handstamp in red ink to indicate the required 20 centimes postage due.

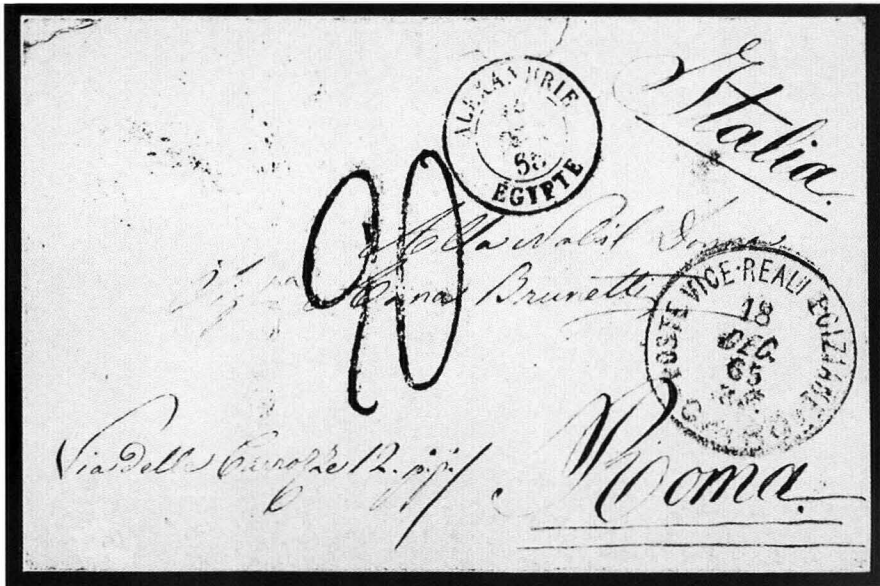


Figure 4. December 1865, letter from Cairo, Egypt sent to Rome via the French Post Office at Alexandria. Note the use of the French "20" decime handstamp to indicate the 20 bajocchi postage due established under Article 27 of the Letter Bill.

France used this same “20” handstamp for a variety of other purposes that did not involve mails sent to or from the Roman States. These bajocchi handstamps were obviously available at the French exchange offices, and were used as postage due markings when required (Figure 3).

Article 27

As noted in Table 1, unpaid letters sent to the Roman States from all French Offices in the Mediterranean were also rated for a collection of 20 bajocchi (100 centimes) per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams, but were exchanged under Article 27 of the Letter Bill. France received a fee of only 5 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams for its Foreign Office postage, while the Roman States again retained 20 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams for its internal postage. The country that provided the sea transit services was credited 75 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams.

Examples of the 20 and 40 bajocchi postage due handstamps were prepared for use at the French offices at Alexandria, Constantinople and Smyrna.³ There is no evidence, however, that these handstamps were ever delivered, as no letters showing these markings have been recorded. Instead, unpaid letters sent directly to the Roman States from the French Offices in the Mediterranean appear to have been either rated in manuscript, or struck with the typical French decime postage due handstamps (Figure 4).

Article 28

Article 28 of the Letter Bill governed the exchange of unpaid letters sent to the Roman States from Switzerland, Luxembourg, Baden, Bavaria, Rhenish Prussia and the Hessen Principalities. A total postage due of 18 bajocchi (90 centimes) per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams was charged on these letters. Whether the letters were sent to the Roman States via the overland route, or via French paquebot service, France received a fee of 74 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams. If the Mediterranean transit service was provided by a Roman States vessel, then France received a fee of only 39 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams, and the Roman States retained the balance.

To date, no examples of the “18” and “36” bajocchi handstamps have been recorded on mails sent to the Roman States. Examples of these markings are known, however, on letters unrelated to the Roman States Post. France used both the “18” and “36” handstamps to represent credits and/or debits (in cents) under the 1857 Franco-American Convention (Figures 5 and 6). Additional examples of the “18” handstamp are known used as decime postage due markings under the Franco-Dutch and Franco-Prussian Conventions.

Article 29

Under Article 29 of the Letter Bill, unpaid letters from non-Rhenish Prussia and the other German States and Principalities not included under Article 28, plus letters from Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, and all letters from overseas countries that entered France by private vessels, were charged 22 bajocchi (1 Franc 10 centimes) per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams on delivery. If these letters were sent to the Roman States via the overland route, or via French paquebot service, France received a fee of 96 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams. If the Mediterranean transit service was provided by a Roman States vessel, then France received a fee of only 61 centimes per $7\frac{1}{2}$ grams, and the Roman States retained the balance.

Figure 7 shows an 1862 unpaid, single weight letter from Berlin, sent via France to Rome under Article 29 of the Letter Bill. Unfortunately, this letter did not receive the 22 bajocchi handstamp, but instead was rated in manuscript. Figure 8 shows an 1863 unpaid letter from Cairo, Egypt which entered the post through the Austrian Post Office at Alexandria, and was forwarded to the Roman States, via France. This letter received the

³*Ibid.*



Figure 5. June 1862, letter from Paris, France prepaid 1F60c for a double weight letter to the United States under the 1857 Franco-American Convention. Note that France applied the 18 bajocchi handstamp in red ink to indicate an 18¢ credit to the United States.

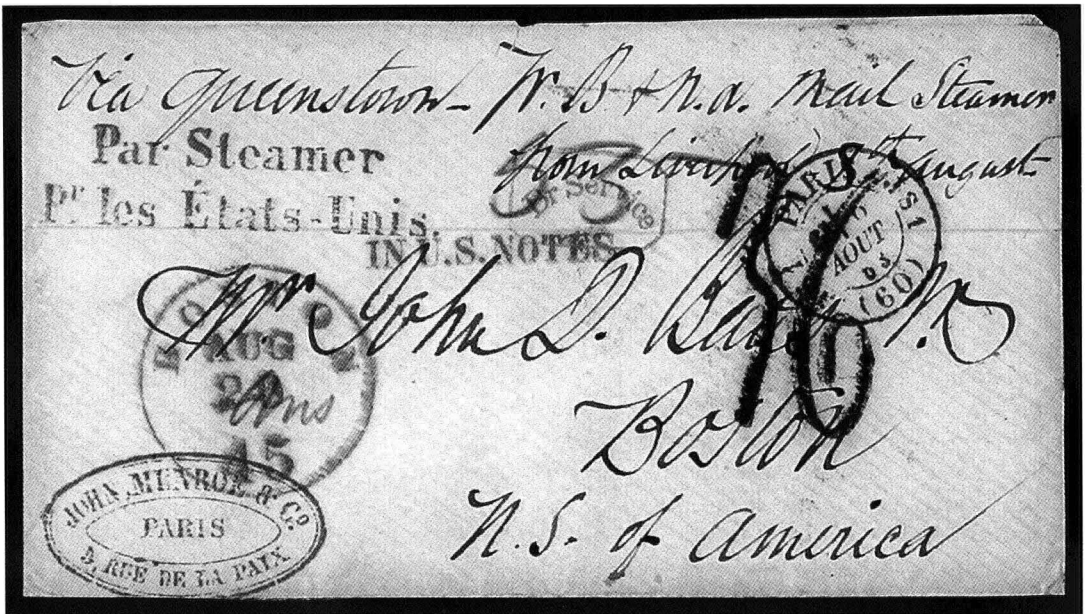


Figure 6. August 1863, triple weight letter from Paris, France sent unpaid to the United States under the 1857 Franco-American Convention. In this case, Paris used the 36 bajocchi handstamp to indicate a 36¢ debit against the United States.

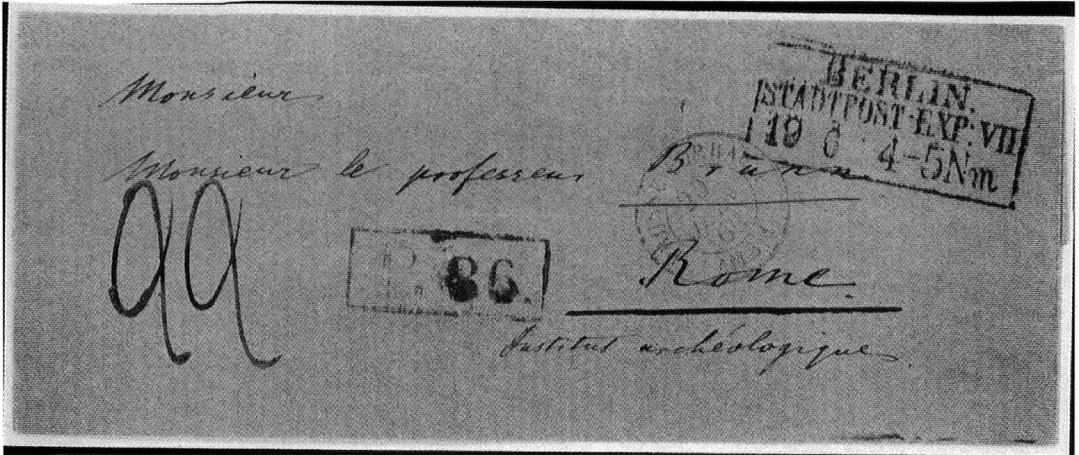


Figure 7. June 1862, letter from Berlin, Prussia sent unpaid to France and forwarded to Rome under Article 29 of the Letter Bill. Note that the 22 bajocchi postage due marking was applied in manuscript.

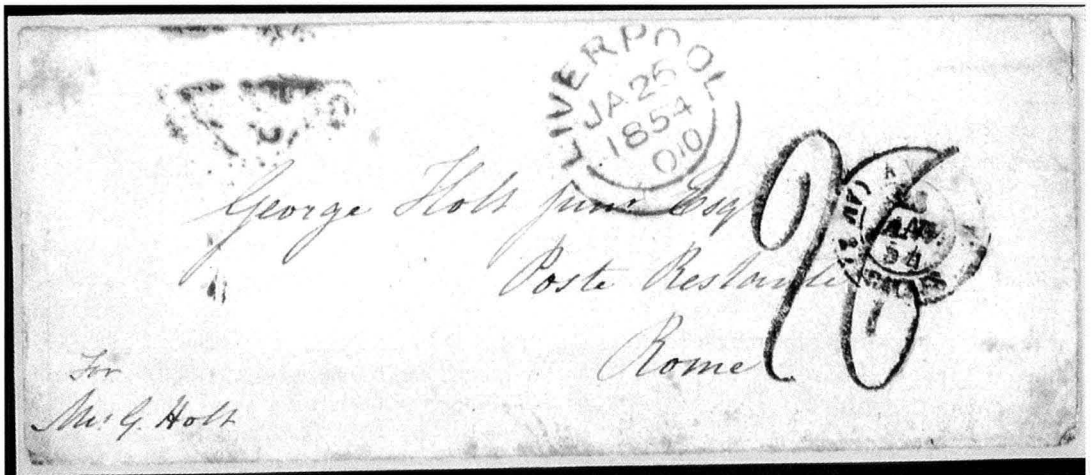


Figure 8. August 1863, letter from Cairo, Egypt sent unpaid to France via the Austrian Post and forwarded to Rome at the 22 bajocchi rate. Although letters from the Austrian Offices in the Levant were not mentioned in the 1853 Letter Bills, such mail was included under Article 29 per March 1861 revisions.

22 bajocchi handstamp, applied at the Marseille exchange office. Note that letters from Austria and the Austrian provinces were not specifically denoted on the original Letter Bill, but were later included under Article 29 via additional provisions of March 1861.

Article 30

Article 30 of the Letter Bill was concerned with the exchange of unpaid letters sent to the Roman States from the United Kingdom, India, China, and all other East Indies origins. The postage due assigned to these letters was 26 bajocchi (1 Franc 30 centimes) per 7½ grams. Of this amount, France received a fee of 1F17c per 7½ grams if the letters were sent to the Roman States via the overland route or by French Mediterranean paquebot service. If the letters were forwarded from France by Roman States vessels, then France was credited with only 82 centimes per 7½ grams and the Roman States retained the balance.

Figure 9 shows an 1854 unpaid, single weight letter from Liverpool sent to the Roman States via France with the distinctive 26 bajocchi handstamp. An unpaid, double weight letter from the same correspondence is shown in Figure 10. This letter bears the 52 bajocchi postage due handstamp, applied by France to indicate the total postage due on delivery.

Article 31

Unpaid letters sent to the Roman States from Australia (via the Suez route) and from all undesignated overseas countries (via Great Britain), were exchanged under Article 31 of the Letter Bill. For accounting purposes, France received a fee of 1F82c per 7½ grams for its portion of the transit services provided on all letters sent to the Roman States via the overland route or by French Mediterranean paquebots. If the sea transit from France was provided by Roman States vessels, then France was credited only 1F47c per 7½ grams and the Roman States retained the balance.

These letters were marked for a collection of 38 bajocchi (1 Franc 90 centimes) per 7½ grams as shown in Figure 11. This 1855 letter originated in the United States and was prepaid 21 cents for the American packet service to Great Britain. It was then forwarded to Rome, via France. Note that, because the United States was not listed as an origin on the original Letter Bill, this letter was included in the “undesignated overseas country” category under Article 31. Apparently, an additional “38” bajocchi postage due marking was applied in manuscript by the Roman States Post, because the original 38 bajocchi handstamp was lightly struck. Unfortunately, no examples of the 76 bajocchi handstamp have been reported to date, although a letter exchanged at the 76 bajocchi rate is known with the postage due applied in manuscript (Figure 12).

Article 32

Under Article 32 of the Letter Bill, unpaid letters sent to the Roman States, via Great Britain and France, from Canada, Newfoundland and Jamaica were charged 42 bajocchi (2 Francs 10 centimes) per 7½ grams on delivery. If these letters were sent from France to the Roman States via the overland route or by French Mediterranean paquebots, France received a fee of 2F03c per 7½ grams. If the Mediterranean transit was provided by vessels under contract to the Roman States Post, then France was credited only 1F68c per 7½ grams.

To date, no examples of unpaid letters sent to the Roman States from these origins have been recorded during the period that this Franco-Roman Convention was in effect. This is not too surprising considering the fact that even unpaid letters addressed to France from these origins were most uncommon during this period. Use of the 42 bajocchi handstamp are known, however, applied by France to denote postage due in decimes on letters that had no connection with the Roman States Post (Figure 13). No examples of the 84 bajocchi handstamp have been recorded. The “84” image shown in Table 1 has been synthesized from known “18” and “40” bajocchi markings.

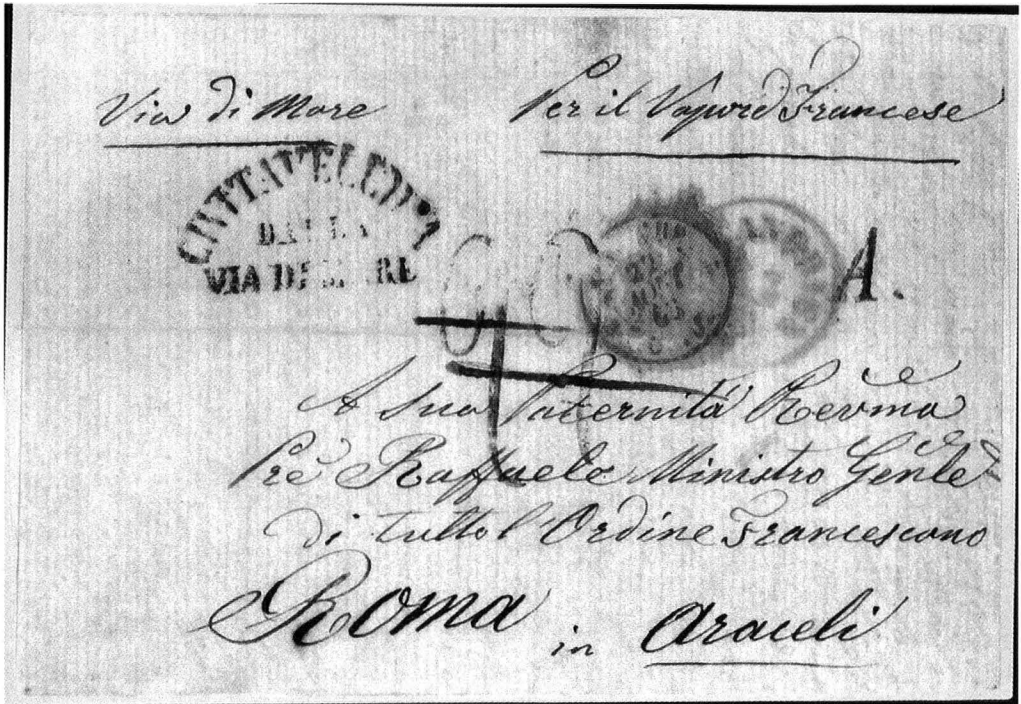


Figure 9. January 1854, letter from Liverpool, England sent unpaid to France and forwarded to Rome under Article 30 of the Letter Bill. France applied the 26 bajocchi postage due handstamp to indicate the total amount due on delivery.

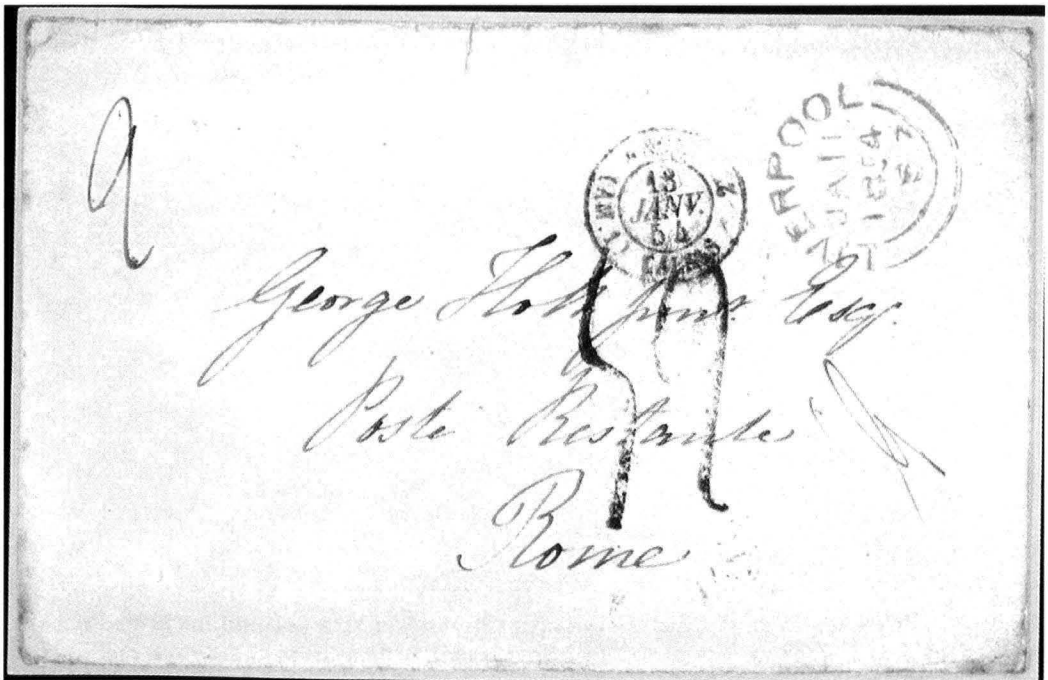


Figure 10. January 1854, double weight letter from Liverpool, England sent unpaid to the Roman States via France and showing the 52 bajocchi postage due handstamp applied by the Paris Foreign Office.

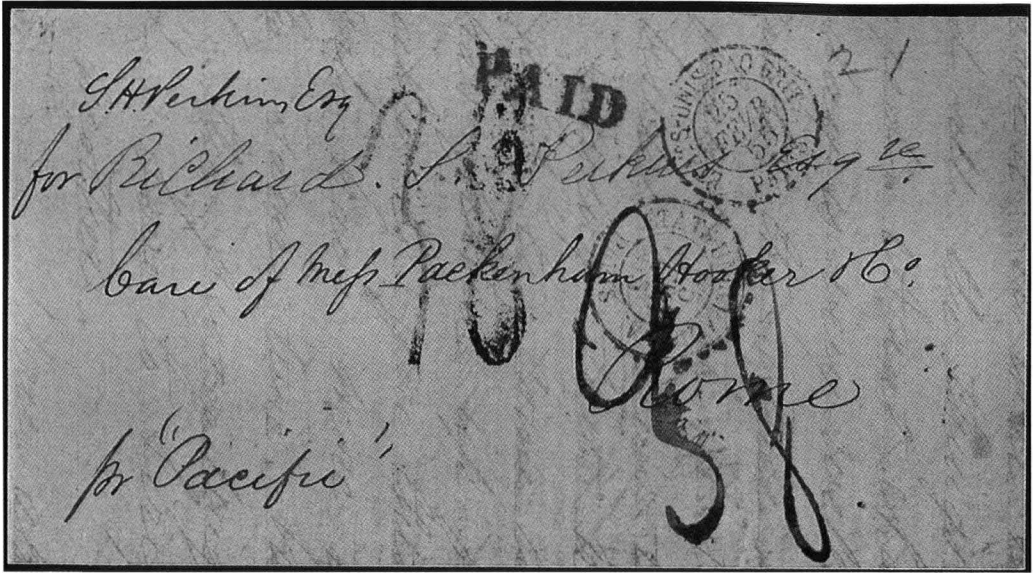


Figure 11. February 1855, letter from Vermont prepaid for American packet service to England, then forwarded to Rome, via France. France treated this letter as totally unpaid, and applied the 38 bajocchi postage due handstamp associated with Article 31 of the Letter Bill. (Marek collection)

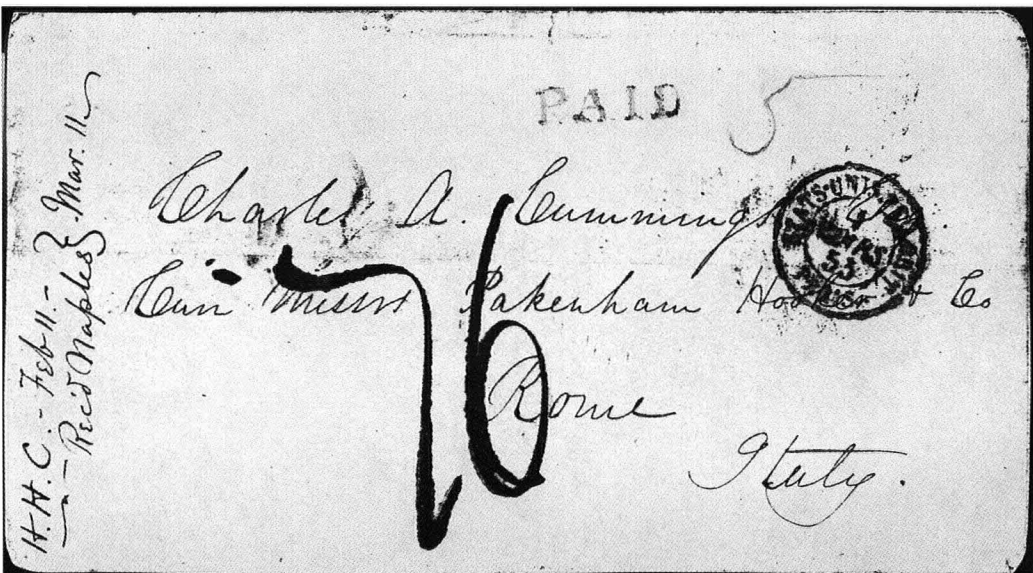


Figure 12. February 1855, double weight letter from New York prepaid for British packet service to England, then forwarded to Rome under Article 31 of the Letter Bill. In this case, the 76 bajocchi postage due marking was applied in manuscript. (Stempien collection)



Figure 13. February 1854, double weight letter from Valparaiso, Chile sent unpaid to England by British packet service via the Panama route, then forwarded to France under the current Franco-British Convention. On arrival, France applied the 42 bajocchi handstamp to denote the required 42 decimes postage due.

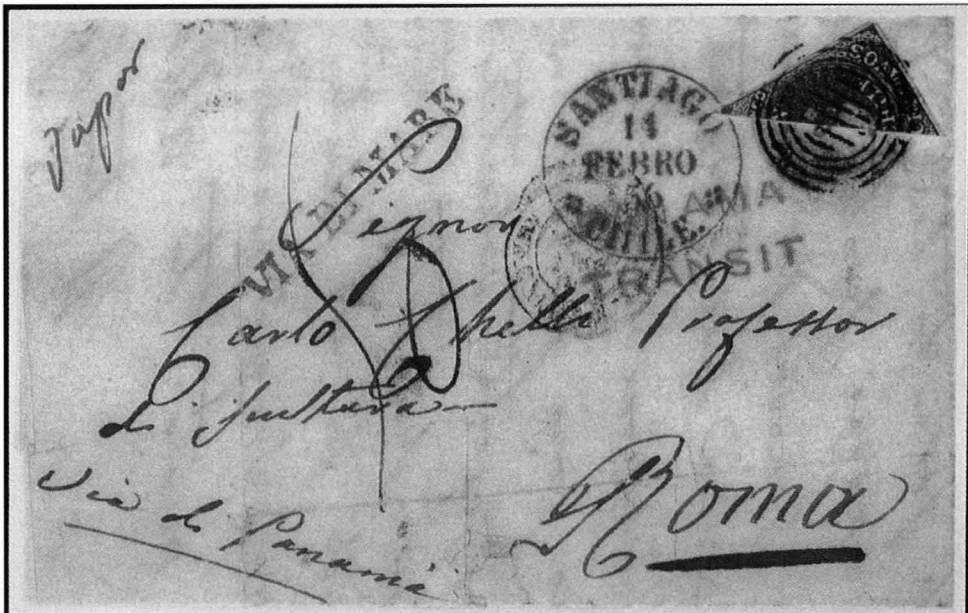


Figure 14. February 1856, locally paid letter from Santiago, Chile sent to England by British packet service via the Panama route, then forwarded to Rome under Article 33 of the Letter Bill. On arrival a collection of 50 bajocchi (manuscript) was required to pay the Roman internal postage plus the transit fees owed to France.



Figure 15. July 1864, double weight letter from Guayaquil, Ecuador sent unpaid to England by British packet service via the Panama route, then forwarded to Rome via France. Beginning 1 January 1858, the 50 bajocchi per 7½ gram rate established under Article 33 of the original Franco-Roman Letter Bill was reduced to 35 bajocchi per 7½ grams.

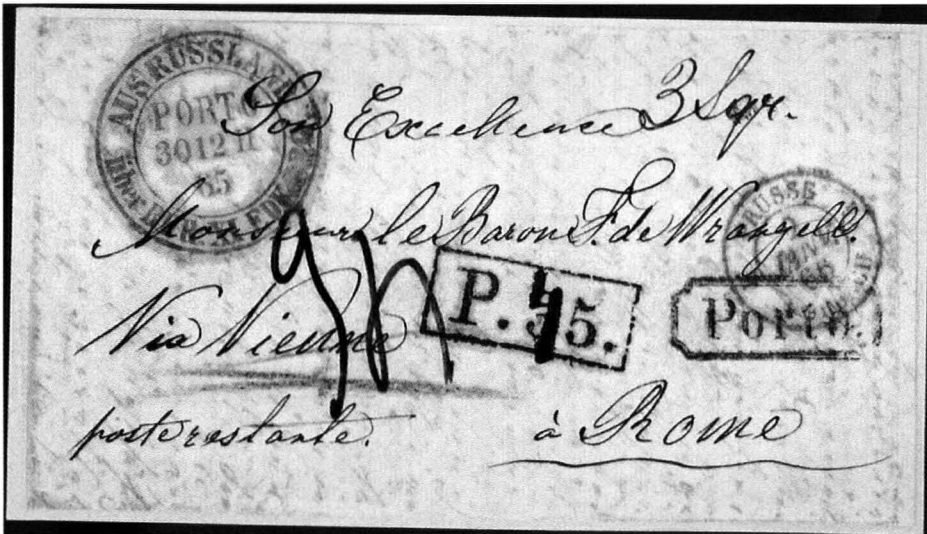


Figure 16. December 1865, letter from St. Petersburg, Russia sent unpaid to France via the Prussian Post, then forwarded to the Roman States. Note that there were no provisions for Russian letters under the original Franco-Roman Letter Bills, but later amendments introduced in March 1861 established a 34 bajocchi per 7½ gram rate for such mail.

Article 33

Unpaid letters from all Pacific origins, sent via the Panama route to Great Britain and forwarded to the Roman States via France, were exchanged under Article 33 of the Letter Bill. For accounting purposes, France received a fee of 2F46c per 7½ grams for its portion of the transit services provided on all letters sent to the Roman States via the overland route or by French Mediterranean paquebots. If the sea transit from France was provided by vessels under contract to the Roman States, then France was credited only 2F11c per 7½ grams and the Roman States retained the balance.

Letters exchanged under Article 33 of the Letter Bill were marked for a collection of 50 bajocchi (2 Francs 50 centimes) per 7½ grams (Figure 14), and presumably, both the 50 bajocchi and 1 scudo (100 bajocchi) handstamps were available for use on such mail. Unfortunately, no examples of these handstamps have been reported. The images shown in Table 1 have again been fabricated from portions of known markings.

Later Revisions To The Letter Bills

The 1853 Franco-Roman Convention remained in effect until the end of August 1866. During this thirteen year period, there were several revisions to the Letter Bills.⁴ Most of these amendments were due to new or revised postal conventions that involved the transit of mails through France. One important revision to the Franco-Roman Letter Bills occurred on 1 January 1858, a direct result of the 1857 Franco-British Convention. The reduced rates of exchange between England and France established under this new Convention caused similar reductions in the exchange rates between France and the Roman States (Figure 15).

Additional modifications to the Franco-Roman Letter Bills occurred in March 1861, at which time provisions were established for the exchange of letters with Austria and the Austrian provinces (Figures 8), as well as with Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Russia (Figure 16).

It is not known if additional bajocchi postage due handstamps were prepared for the new rates associated with the revised Letter Bills. To date, all known examples of these new postage due rates have been recorded in manuscript only (Figures 15 and 16). It is hoped that copies of the various revised Letter Bills will eventually be found, so that a more complete discussion of the bajocchi postage due handstamps from the 1853 Franco-Roman Convention can be presented. At best, this present effort must be considered a "work in progress." Any additional documentation, comments and corrections will be gratefully accepted. □

⁴Dr. Thomas Mathá, "Kirchenstaat, 1815-1870, Tarifstudie," a paper presented at the IPHF meeting in Rheinbach, 1999.

ADDITIONAL ANSWER TO PROBLEM COVER IN ISSUE 181

Figure 1A is a "STEAMBOAT" cover to Baltimore paid by using a 3¢ stamped envelope and with "DUE / 1." It is an adjunct to Figure 1B, a problem cover in Issue 181, also a "STEAMBOAT" cover to Baltimore but paid 3¢ in stamps and with "DUE 2 cts." The question of the 2¢ due cover was answered by Route Agents Don Evans and Jim Milgram in Issues 182 and 183, respectively, who differed on the date of the cover.

The following is submitted in an effort to clarify the dating of the cover in question. The ship and steamboat rates from 1861 to 1863 were 5¢ each for delivery at the port of arrival and 2¢ each plus ordinary postage for delivery at other than the place of arrival. This was changed in 1863 (effective 30 June 1863) to double rates of postage, or 4¢ for delivery at the port of arrival and 6¢ for delivery at other than the place of arrival. The *Postal Laws and Regulations of the United States*, dated 1 March 1866, offer the following guidance:

The Postmaster General shall have authority to pay, or cause to be paid, a sum not exceeding two cents each for all letters conveyed in any vessel or steamboat not employed in carrying the mail from one port or place to any other port or place in the United States, or from any foreign port to any port within the United States, subject to such regulations as the Postmaster General may prescribe. But all such letters shall be deposited in the post office at the port of arrival for mailing or delivery; and if for delivery within the United States, shall be rated with double rates of postage, which shall cover the fee paid to the vessel. No fees shall be allowed for letters collected by a carrier on a mail route. (Postal Laws - Section 165)

If postage is partly prepaid, the unpaid postage will be charged at the prepaid rates. (Regulations - Chapter XVII. Payment of Postage. Section 151.)

The ship letter and packets embrace the letters and packets brought into the United States from foreign countries, or carried from one port in the United States to another, in any private ship or vessel, before such letters have been mailed. (Regulations - Chapter XXI. Ship and Steamboat Letters. Section 230.)

In like manner, when practicable, all letters should be prepaid which are received by steamboats or other vessels not in the mail service, or carrying the mail with no route agent on board. When prepaid, the master of the vessel, if under contract to carry the mail, may receive one cent "way," and if not under contract with the department, two cents each from the postmaster in whose office he deposits them; and they should be delivered to their addresses without any charge beyond the amount prepaid. But if unpaid, they should be treated as ship letters, and are chargeable as such with a postage of six cents, if delivered at the office at which the vessel shall arrive, and with two cents in addition to the ordinary rate of postage if destined to be conveyed by post to another place. In the latter case, the master of the vessel is entitled to receive two cents a letter. (Regulations - Chapter XXI. Ship and Steamboat Letters. Section 242.)

At the post office where deposited they will be charged with double rates of postage to be collected at the office of delivery, that is to say, six cents for the single weight if mailed and four cents the single weight if delivered at the office; but if such letter has been prepaid by United States stamps at such double rate of postage, no additional charge will be made. If only partly prepaid by stamps, the unpaid balance will be charged and collected on delivery. (Regulations - Chapter XXI. Ship and Steamboat Letters. Section 247.)

This was the first PL&R. published since 1859; the issue planned for 1863 was not published. The 1866 *PL&R* undoubtedly incorporated the then current postal practices. The Steamboat cover in Figure 1B was charged "DUE 2¢ cts." conforming to the practice between 1861 and 1 July 1863, and the "STEAMBOAT" cover in Figure 1A was charged "DUE / 1" conforming to the practice beginning 1 July 1863.

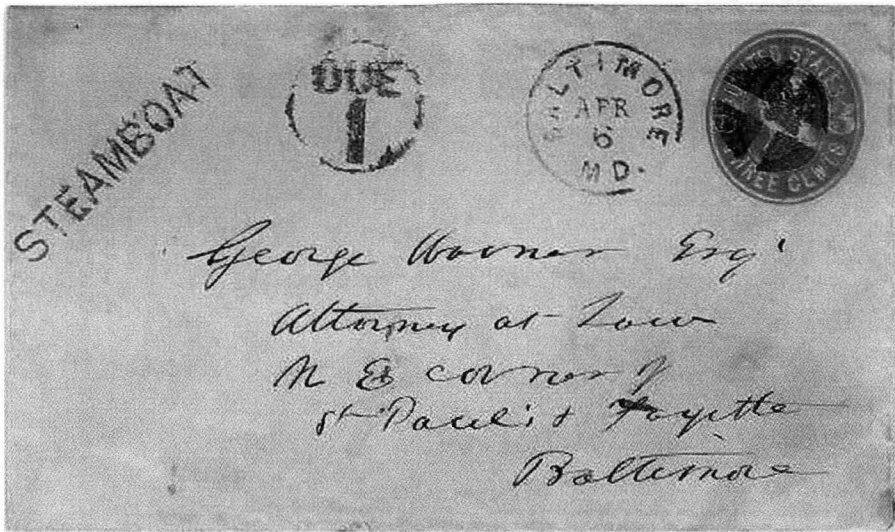


Figure 1A. "STEAMBOAT" cover to Baltimore with "DUE / 1"

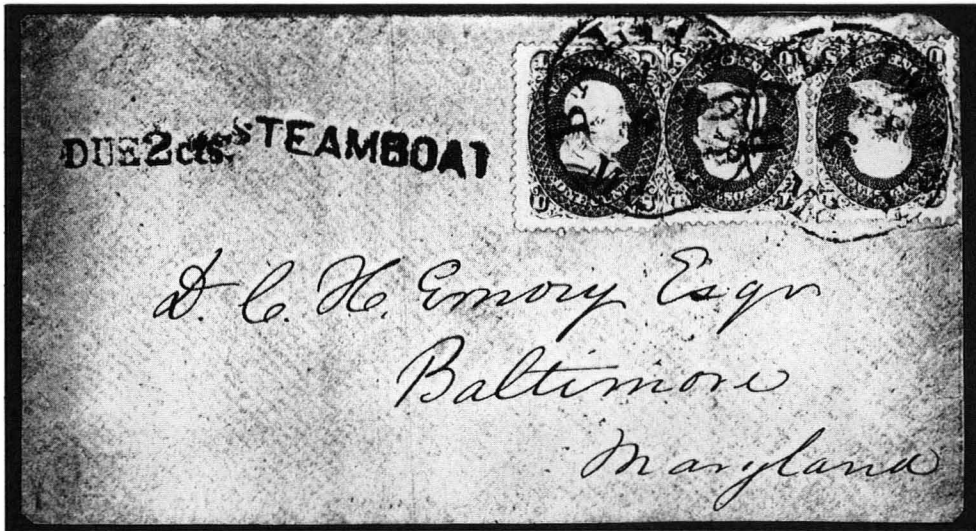


Figure 1B. "STEAMBOAT" cover to Baltimore with "DUE 2cts."



Figure 2. 1868 cover from Melbourne, Victoria to New York via Panama

Since no responses were received for the Victoria cover (Issue 182) nor for the covers to Württemberg and Jerusalem (Issue 183), your editors will give analyses based on their knowledge and resources and await different opinions from our Route Agents.

ANSWER TO PROBLEM COVER IN ISSUE 182

The large size cover in Figure 2 is franked with 8 shillings in stamps, a very high rate. It was posted in Melbourne, Victoria in 1868 to New York and received the following rate markings - all in manuscript:

- Front - "80" in ink - upper left
- "80 Cents Due" in pencil - right
- "H (or is it \$?) 1.80" in pencil - bottom left
- Back - "Collect H (\$?) 1.80"

Explain the postage collected - \$1.80 or 80 cents? Note: Victoria did not join the UPU until October 1891.

Working backwards, "80 Cents Due" in the U.S. seems to be the reasonable postage to bring a four ounce cover and enclosure to New York from Panama as incoming steamship mail at 10¢ per half ounce. The other number, "1.80," could be a total of postage due for a group of letters for the same addressee and marked on the top.

The postage from Melbourne to Panama at one shilling per half ounce would be eight shillings paid in stamps. However, such a rate existed only in early 1860, and was then reduced to six pence per half ounce until it was withdrawn in 1869.^{1,2} So we do not have a match up of rates between Victoria/Panama and Panama/New York. Can any of our Route Agents solve this dilemma, or provide some hints?

ANSWERS TO PROBLEM COVERS IN ISSUE 183

Figure 3 shows a simple cover from Boston to Providence which is dated 1855 on a note inside. The Boston CDS is in red and indicates a postage of "6 cts." Prepayment of letter mail was required beginning April 1, 1855, in either cash or stamps.

This cover is unusual since the Boston marking in red indicates "6 cts." double rate. The contents are a brief note, and without other enclosures the cover would not be rated double. Apparently, this was an unpaid cover and the Boston Post Office applied its CDS in red for a single postage of 3¢ doubled to 6¢ as a penalty rather than return it for postage. Can anyone provide other similar examples?

The Figure 4 cover is from Utah Territory to Königreich Württemberg (Germany) in 1856. The "SALT LAKE CITY" and the "46 / NEW YORK" CDS's are in black as is a "48" in double circle. The center of the cover has a "1/30" in red crayon and a large "1/30" in blue ink. A blue squiggle appears at upper left that could be a "2" written in the same blue ink as the "1/30." The back holds three July 1856 German transit marks in black and an "AACHEN / 22 / 7" CDS in red. How can the rating be explained, especially the "48" on the front?

This cover was carried by the Prussian Closed Mail at a double rate (the squiggle must be a "2"). It left New York on July 9 for England by an American Packet which gave the U.S. a credit of 46¢ (the "46" at top of the New York CDS). It went in a closed bag through England, across the English Channel, and through Belgium to the Exchange Office at Aachen (German; called Aix-la-Chapelle in French). Here the cover received a marking of "1/30," the total postage required, which is one gulden and thirty kreuzer in Württemberg currency, the equivalent of 60¢ U.S. (46¢ U.S. credit, plus 2¢ Belgian Transit and 5¢ Prussian inland times two = 14¢).

¹Jane and Michael Moubay, *British Letter Mail to Overseas Destinations, 1840-1875* (London: The Royal Philatelic Society London, 1992).

²C[olin] Tabcart, *United Kingdom Letter Rates, 1657-1900: Inland and Overseas* (Fareham, Hants. [England]: C. Tabcart, 1989).

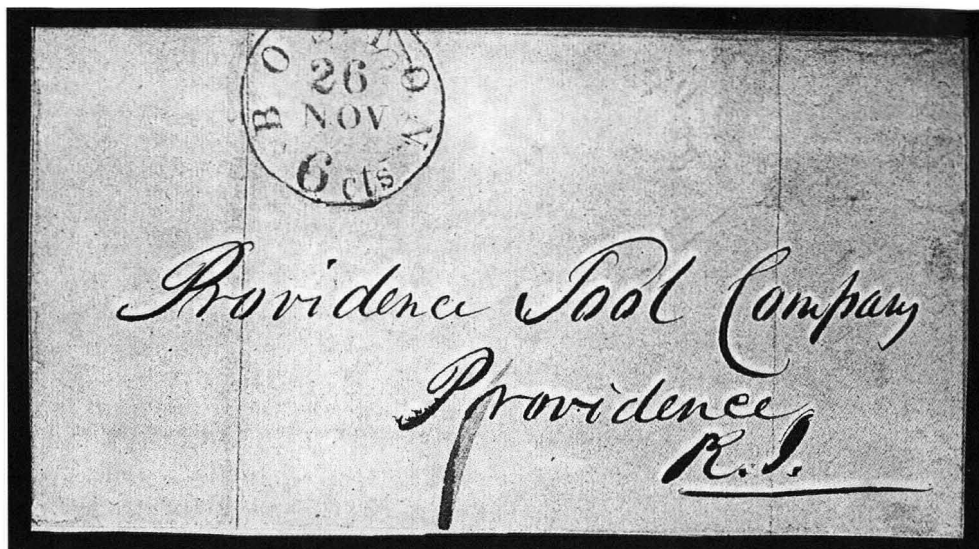


Figure 4. U.S. Territorial cover from Salt Lake City to Württemberg

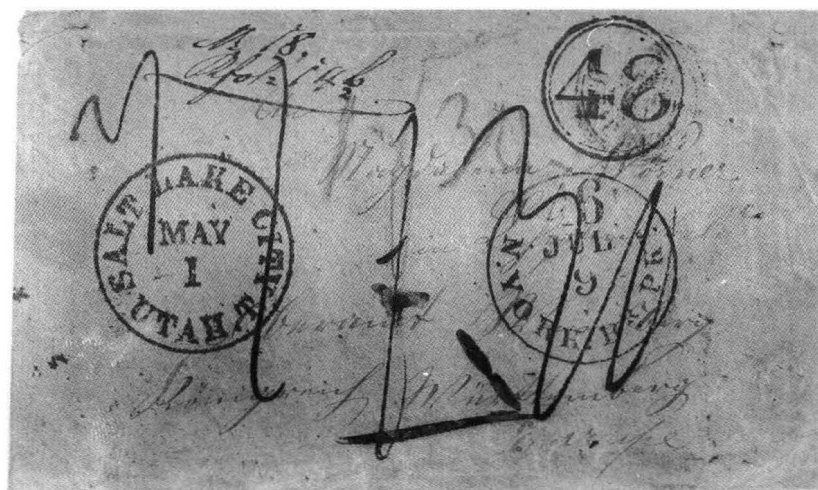


Figure 3. Boston cover, dated 1855, to Providence, R.I.

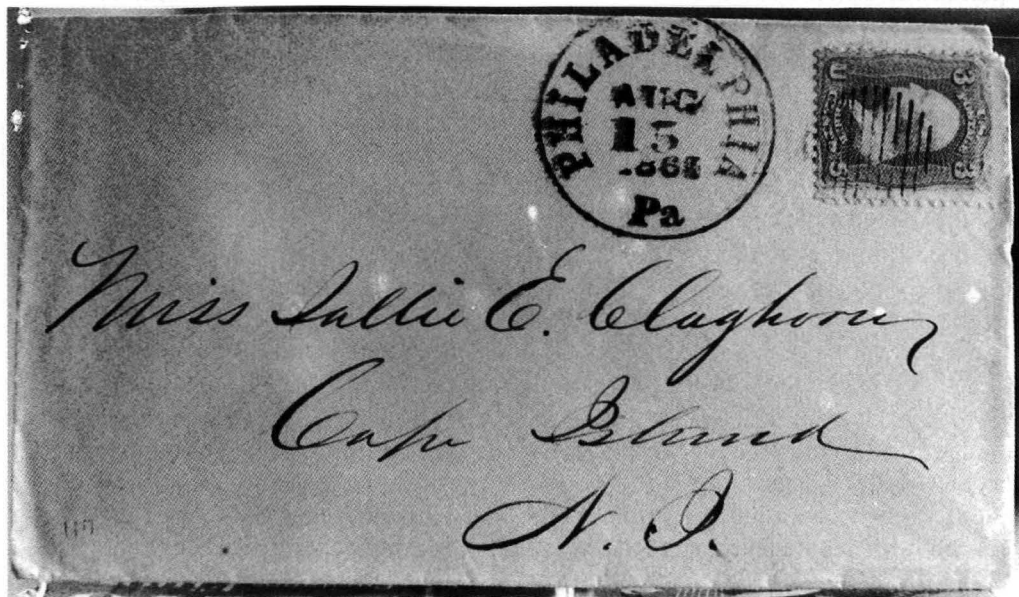


Figure 5. U.S. #65 canceled AUG 15 / 1867 Earliest Date?

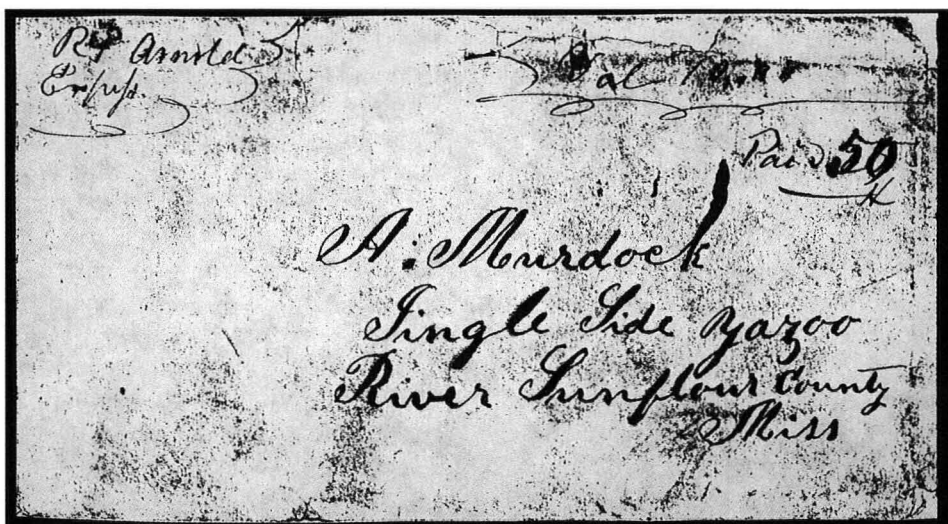


Figure 6. Arnold Express cover to Sunflower County, Miss.

Apparently, the “48” was intended by the originating Salt Lake City post office to be the charge for getting the letter from Utah Territory to England in the British Open Mail, which was an error. This cost was “46” cents as marked in the New York CDS (5¢ U.S. inland, plus 18¢ sea and British transit times two).

The U.S. #65 canceled at Philadelphia “AUG / 15 / 186?” (Figure 5) received many comments from Terry Schaffer, Jim Cate, Doug Penwell and Bob Stets who all agreed that the year date of this cover was not 1861 (earliest known usage), but was either a smudged 1863 or 1865. Philadelphia postal history sources were submitted showing that the large Philadelphia CDS with a duplex thin line patent obliterator did not come into use until after April 1863.

The Figure 6 Arnold Express cover to Sunflower County, Miss. has had some light shed on its history. First, Van Koppersmith advises that it is correct to state that the Yazoo River does not presently border on Sunflower County. But it did at the time of this cover; the Yazoo River flowed along the Sunflower County border until 15 March 1871 when most of Leflore County was carved from part of it.

Then Don Garrett sends some pages of *The Journal of Mississippi History* which describes an “Alfred Murdock” (the same “A. Murdock” as our addressee?) as one of the few settlers in Sunflower County. “There were no towns in Sunflower County, only a few landings on the rivers. The Yazoo River was the chief highway of the region for plantation owners to market and to bring cargoes of freight and passengers to the plantation landing.” And a page of *Yazoo, Its Legends and Legacies*, by DeCell and JoAnne Pritchard, shows an advertisement from *The Vicksburg Advocate* May 3, 1831 for “The ‘STEAM-BOAT TALMA’ to ply regularly between Manchester and New Orleans, touching at all intermediate landings” and signed by “PINCKHARD & ARNOLD.” So the same Mr. Arnold may have run a private express as well as operated a steamboat in the 1830s in the sparsely populated counties of Southern Mississippi. Also it seems that Single (or Jingle?) Side could be a plantation landing. Does anyone else have any clues?

Figure 7 is a New Year’s Day 1876 cover from France to the U.S. An originator’s handstamp - upper right in blue - is dated “DECE / 31 [inverted] / 1875.” Two 25¢ stamps are canceled by “1769” (*gros chiffres*) in a rhomboid of dots, which corresponds with the “LE HAVRE / 1^E / 1 / JAN / 76” CDS, both in black.

When the General Postal Union was formed and a major group of countries entered the GPU on 1 July 1875, France was a significant omission. The delegate from France at the Berne Postal Congress in 1874 did not have the necessary powers to sign the treaty with the other nations on 9 October 1874. France was permitted to sign the treaty later on 3 May 1875 provided France be allowed to place it in force on 1 January 1876 instead of 1 July 1875.

Thus the subject cover has the distinction of being posted on the last day, 31 December 1875, of the U.S.-France Convention of 28 April 1874, at the single rate of 50 centimes. It was processed in the first collection of mail in Le Havre on the first day, 1 January 1876, at the GPU rate of 40 centimes (10 centimes overpaid), which also removed the need to provide accountancy marks on paid international mail.

The Figure 8 cover to Jerusalem, endorsed “Via Marseilles,” is a beauty. It has a blue “PHILADELPHIA / OCT / ? / Pa.” CDS accompanied by a red PHILA. / 5Cts [altered to “61”] / PAID” octagon with a confirming manuscript “61 PAID,” both rates in black. The two “61” rates were crossed out in magenta and a large “50” added in magenta ink. The cover passed through London where it received an orange “PAID / 8 NO 8 / 1851” CDS. Two vertical disinfection slits each measure 25 mm long and are 50 mm apart. Explain the “50” marking on this cover and the basis for the “61” rating.



Figure 7. New Year's Day 1876 cover from France to New York

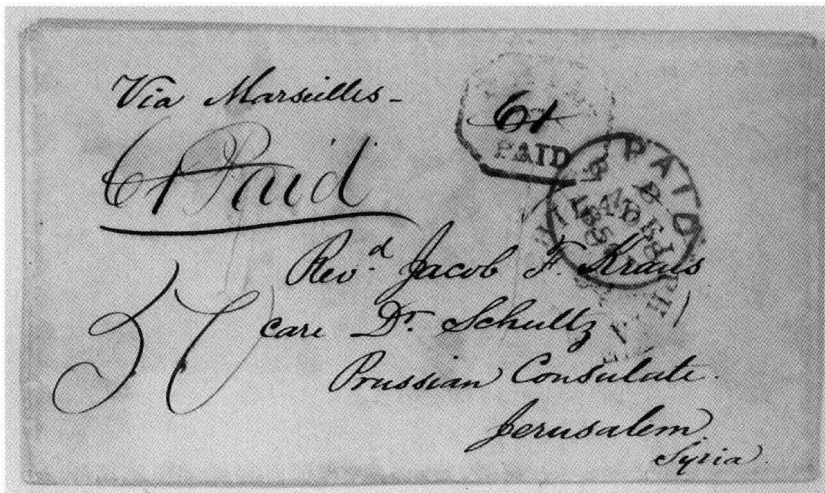


Figure 8. 1851 cover from Philadelphia to Jerusalem

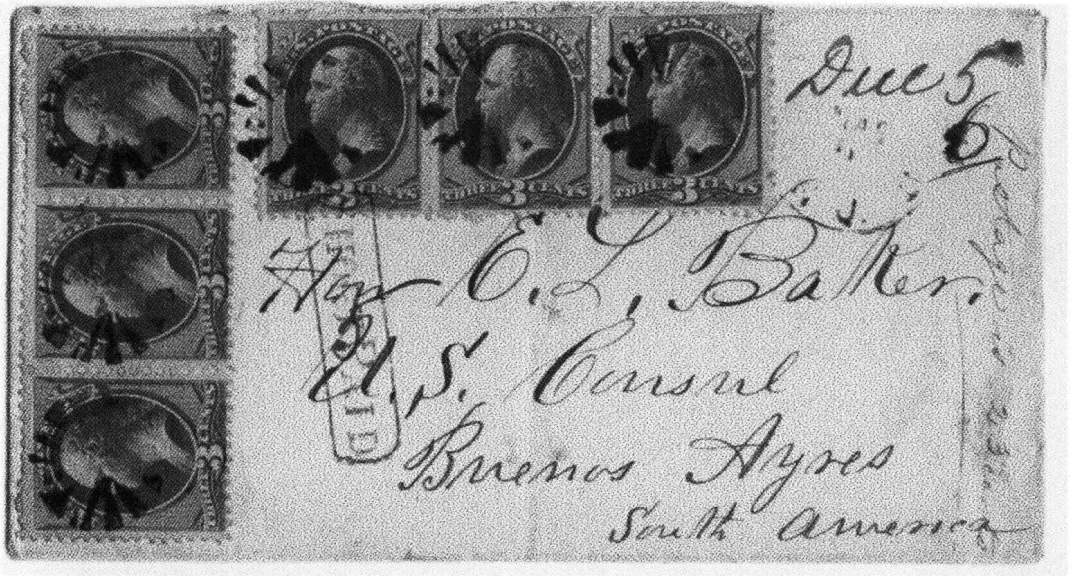


Figure 9A. Obverse of "ONE RATE SHORT PAID" U. S. cover to Buenos Ayres

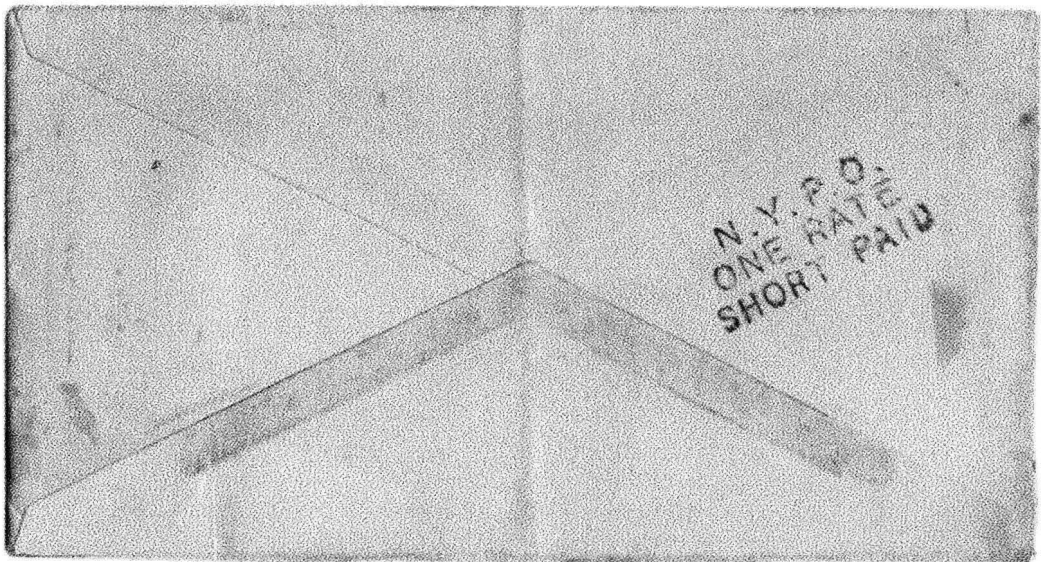


Figure 9B. Reverse of U.S. cover to Buenos Ayres

The "61" rating for this cover is recorded by Hargest under Syria³ as being introduced in 1852 as the quarter ounce rate prepaid from the U.S. by British mail via Marseilles. (Apparently Hargest is in error and the "61" rating was in effect as early as 1851 as dated in the London CDS, or else the wrong date appeared in the CDS). The confusing part is what does the "50" represent? It should be the amount Britain had to pay for postage to take the cover to its destination after it had been processed in London. This amount is recorded by Moubray⁴ for British transit, French overland (quarter ounce) and British Mediterranean packet service as D one shilling eight pence, which is 40¢. The difference is 21¢, the amount needed to pay for the U.S. inland charge (5¢) and Atlantic transit (16¢). Therefore, your editors conclude that the accountancy amount of 50¢ should be 40, unless someone out there can provide a better analysis. Also, can someone corroborate the date the 61 rate became effective for mail to Syria.

PROBLEM COVERS FOR ISSUE #184

Figures 9A and 9B show a cover with interesting markings to Buenos Ayres from a town in New Jersey (undecipherable CDS at upper right) franked with two strips of 3 of the 3¢ Scott #184, circa 1879. A boxed "SHORT PAID" in black is on the left and a manuscript magenta "Due 5" with a black "6" below at upper right. The reverse has an unusual black handstamp "N.Y. P. O. / ONE RATE / SHORT PAID." What is the correct rate for this cover and what is the "ONE RATE SHORT PAID"?

Another cover with interesting markings, from "PHILADELPHIA, PA / NOV / 19 / 1887 / F.D." to Auckland, New Zealand, appears as Figures 10A and 10B. It is franked with 7¢ in U.S. postage and handstamped in purple "SHORT PAID / DUE 5d. [in black ms.]" with a purple boxed "MONEY LETTER, / DEAD LETTER OFFICE, / Letter P / Number 249 [in black ms.] / Volume 37 [in black ms.]." There is a "48" in black ink at upper center and a "44" in red pencil at lower left. \$1.00 in pencil appears on both front and back. The reverse also has two black handstamps: "PHILADELPHIA, PA. / NOV / 19 / 1887 / F. D." duplex with "2" in a negative 4-bar ellipse, and "USA / DEAD / LETTER / OFFICE / NOV / 22 - 87" triangle. The reverse has lettered across the top in black ink "Remailed Nov 26" 1887."

Please explain :

- 1) The short paid amount and how collected.
- 2) The meaning of the numbers "44" and "48."
- 3) The address and the "Remailed" statement on the reverse are in the same unique hand. Was the letter returned to sender?
- 4) Did the cover ever reach New Zealand?

Please send your answers to the problem covers for this issue, and any further discussion of previous answers to other problem covers, to the Cover Corner Editor within two weeks of receiving your *Chronicle*. The "go to press" deadline for the February 2000 Cover Corner is January 10, 2000. I can receive mail at 9068 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45231-4808, and via an E-Mail address: RWCARLIN@aol.com. □

³George E. Hargest, *History of Letter Post Communication Between the United States and Europe, 1845-1875*, rev. ed. (Lawrence, Mass.: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1975).

⁴Moubray, *op. cit.*



Figure 10A. Front of 1887 Philadelphia Money Letter Short Paid to New Zealand

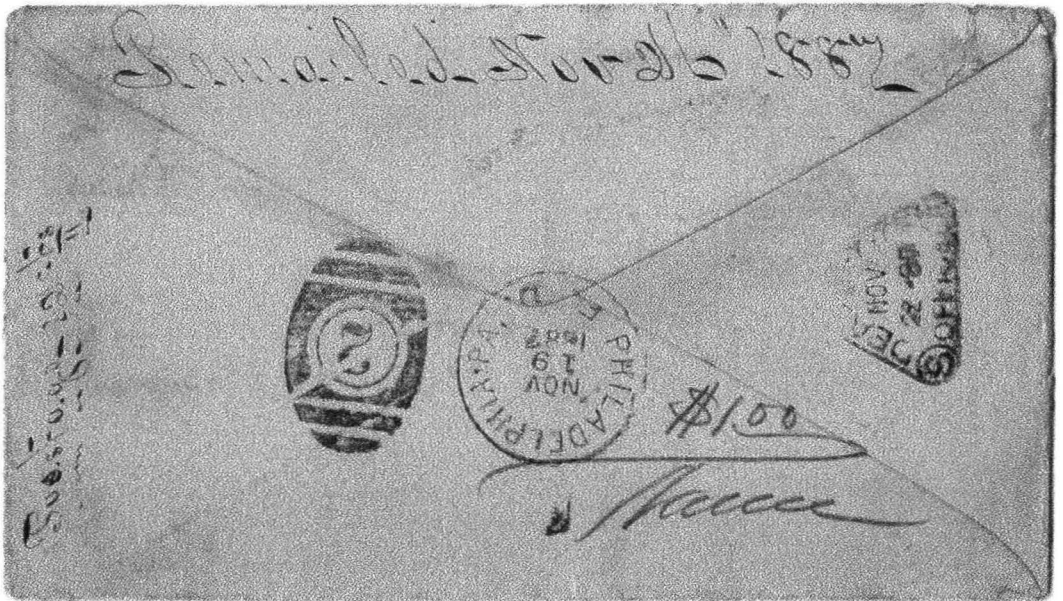


Figure 10B. Back of 1887 Money Letter to New Zealand

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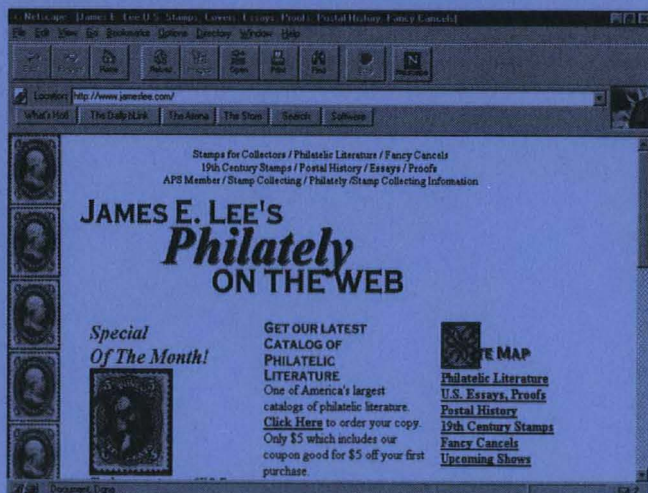
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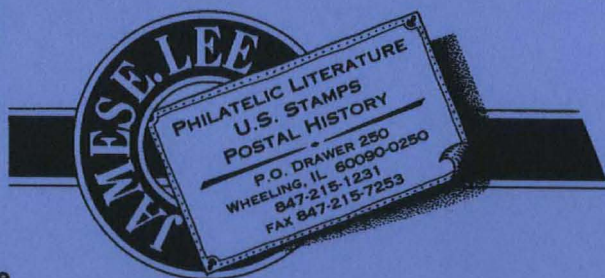


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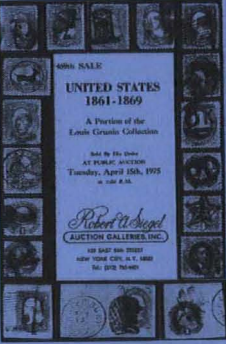
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